thinking, recording, and writing history in the ancient world

Edited by Kurt A. Raaflaub

Thinking, Recording, and Writing History
in the Ancient World

The Ancient World: Comparative Histories

Series Editor: Kurt A. Raaflaub

Published

War and Peace in the Ancient World
Edited by Kurt A. Raaflaub

Household and Family Religion in Antiquity
Edited by John Bodel and Saul Olyan

Epic and History
Edited by David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub

Geography and Ethnography: Perceptions of the World in Pre-Modern Societies
Edited by Kurt A. Raaflaub and Richard J. A. Talbert

The Roman Empire in Context: Historical and Comparative Perspectives
Edited by Johann P. Arnason and Kurt A. Raaflaub

Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-Modern World
Edited by Susan E. Alcock, John Bodel, and Richard J. A. Talbert

The Gift in Antiquity
Edited by Michael L. Satlow

The Greek Polis and the Invention of Democracy: A Politico-cultural Transformation and Its Interpretations
Edited by Johann P. Arnason, Kurt A. Raaflaub, and Peter Wagner

Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World
Edited by Kurt A. Raaflaub

Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World

Edited by
Kurt A. Raaflaub

WILEY Blackwell

Contents

Series Editor's Preface

The Ancient World: Comparative Histories

The purpose of this series is to pursue important social, political, religious, economic, and intellectual issues through a wide range of ancient or early societies, while occasionally covering an even broader diachronic scope. By engaging in comparative studies of the ancient world on a truly global scale, this series hopes to throw light not only on common patterns and marked differences, but also to illustrate the remarkable variety of responses humankind developed to meet common challenges. Focusing as it does on periods that are far removed from our own time, and in which modern identities are less immediately engaged, the series contributes to enhancing our understanding and appreciation of differences among cultures of various traditions and backgrounds. Not least, it thus illuminates the continuing relevance of the study of the ancient world in helping us to cope with problems of our own multicultural world.

In the present case, as in that of some of the earlier volumes in the series, "the ancient world" is understood very broadly. Here a phenomenon of crucial importance for human civilization, the function, remembrance, and recording of the past, is examined not only in the global social and cultural context of what is usually understood as antiquity but also in that of societies that existed in later periods but are structurally comparable to ancient ones, such as early Japan, the early Islamic world, and the early Americas.

Earlier volumes in the series are *War and Peace in the Ancient World* (ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub, 2007); *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (eds. John Bodel and Saul Olyan, 2008); *Epic and History* (eds. David Konstan and Kurt Raaflaub, 2010); *Geography and Ethnography: Perceptions of the World in Premodern Societies* (eds. Kurt Raaflaub and Richard Talbert, 2010); *The Roman Empire in Context: Historical*

and Comparative Perspectives (eds. Johann P. Arnason and Kurt A. Raaflaub, 2011); *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-modern World* (eds. Susan E. Alcock, John Bodel, and Richard J. A. Talbert, 2012); *The Gift in Antiquity* (ed. Michael Satlow, 2013), and *The Greek Polis and the Invention of Democracy: A Politico-Cultural Transformation and Its Interpretations* (eds. Johann P. Arnason, Kurt A. Raaflaub, and Peter Wagner, 2013).

Kurt A. Raaflaub

Notes on Contributors

Eve-Marie Becker is Professor of New Testament Exegesis at the University of Aarhus, Denmark. Her main fields of interest are Pauline and Gospel studies, literary history, historiography, and hermeneutics and interpretation theory. Her publications include *Die antike Historiographie und die Anfänge der christlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (ed., 2005); *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie* (2006); and *Writing History in New Testament Times* (in preparation).

Marc Zvi Brettler is the Dora Golding Professor of Biblical Studies at Brandeis University. He has published and lectured widely on metaphor and the Bible, the nature of biblical historical texts, and gender issues and the Bible. He is coeditor of the *Jewish Study Bible* and the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* (2004), and author of *The Book of Judges* (2002); *How to Read the Bible* (2005); *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (1998), and *The Bible and the Believer* (2012) among other books.

Lisa Brooks is Associate Professor of English and American Studies at Amherst College. Her interests focus on Native American studies, early American literature, and comparative American Studies. She wrote the "Afterword" for *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2006), has published *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (2008), coauthored a collaborative volume, *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (2008), and is currently working on a book project, "Turning the Looking Glass on Captivity and King Philip's War."

David Carr is Charles Howard Candler Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Emory University and currently Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York. He is the author of *Phenomenology and the Problem of History* (1974, reissued 2009); *Time, Narrative, and History* (1986); *Interpreting*

Husserl (1987); *The Paradox of Subjectivity* (1999); and numerous articles on philosophy and theory of history, especially in *History and Theory*, whose board of editors he joined in 2005.

Nicholas P. Carter has an M.A. in Latin American Studies from the University of Texas and is currently a doctoral student at Brown University, working with the El Zotz Archaeological Project in Guatemala. His research interests are broad, including anthropological archaeology; linguistic and semiotic anthropology; the origins, nature, and disintegration of complex polities; writing systems; and ancient economies. His dissertation focuses on the practice and representation of social inequality in Lowland Maya polities during the Terminal Classic period (circa 800–1000 CE).

Lori Boornazian Diel is Associate Professor of Art History at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. She is a specialist on Aztec pictorial histories and has published, among others, "Women and Political Power: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Noblewomen in Aztec Pictorial Histories," in *Res: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics* 47 (2005); "Till Death Do Us Part: Unconventional Marriages as Aztec Political Strategy," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 18 (2007); and *The Tira de Tepechpan: Negotiating Place under Aztec and Spanish Rule* (2008).

Stephen W. Durrant is Professor Emeritus of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Oregon, where he was named Distinguished Professor of the Humanities. He has also taught at National Taiwan University and at the University of Münster. He specializes in early Chinese literature, historiography, and history. Among his publications are *The Tale of the Nisan Shamaness: A Manchu Folk Epic* (coauthored, 1977); *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (1995), and *The Siren and the Sage: Wisdom and Knowledge in Ancient Greece and China* (coauthored, 2000). In a collaborative project, he is currently completing a complete translation of the first major Chinese historical text, *Zuo Commentary*.

James L. Fitzgerald is the Purandara Das Distinguished Professor of Sanskrit in the Department of Classics at Brown University. He is the general editor of the University of Chicago Press complete translation of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* as well as the translator of volumes 7 (containing "The Book of the Women" and "The Laws for Kings") and 8 (containing "The Norms for Gaining Absolute Beatitude") in that 10-volume series.

Jonas Grethlein is Professor of Classics at the University of Heidelberg. His research has focused on archaic and classical Greek literature, hermeneutical philosophy, and narratology. His recent books include *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias. Eine Untersuchung aus phänomenologischer und narratologischer Perspektive* (2006); *The Greeks and Their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (2010); and *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography: The 'Plupast' from Herodotus to Appian* (coedited; 2012).

Andrew Marsham is Lecturer in Islamic History at the University of Edinburgh. In 2009 he published *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire*. He is also the author of a number of articles and book chapters on the history and historiography of the late antique and early Islamic Middle East, as well as comparative work including "Universal Histories in Christendom and the Islamic World, *c*.700–*c*.1400," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* (2012). His current research projects include a history of the Umayyad Empire.

Andreas Mehl is Professor Emeritus of Ancient History at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. His fields of research are ancient (especially Roman) historiography, Hellenism (Seleucid Empire and Ptolemaic Cyprus), the history of Cyprus in antiquity, and the history of culture and civilization. Recent publications include *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development* (2011); "Zyperns Einordnung in die politische Welt Vorderasiens im späten 2. und frühen 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.," in C. Ulf and R. Rollinger (eds.), *Lag Troia in Kilikien? Der aktuelle Streit um Homers Ilias*, 207–24 (2011), and "Der Bürger und die Musik in Aristoteles' Werk über den Staat (Politika): Einige Bemerkungen," in A. Marneros (ed.), *Episteme, Scientia, Wissenschaft. Eine epistemische Anthologie anlässlich der Emeritierung*, 100–19, 529–36 (2011).

Piotr Michalowski is George G. Cameron Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Michigan, and a member of the American Philosophical Society. He has written widely on many aspects of ancient Mesopotamian cultures, on history, literature, and linguistics, and on matters of literacy, historiography, geography, and music, among other topics. He has published *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (1989), *Letters from Early Mesopotamia* (1993) and *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom* (2011). He is currently working on a volume of translations of Sumerian poetry.

Jason Neelis is Associate Professor of South Asian Religions at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada. He specializes in the study of early Buddhist inscriptions and manuscripts in their historical and religious contexts, and is interested in relationships between patterns of Buddhist transmission and trade networks. He is author of "*La Vieille Route* Reconsidered: Alternative Paths for Early Transmission of Buddhism beyond the Borderlands of South Asia," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 16 (2002 [2006]): 143–64; "Passages to India: Śaka and Kuṣāṇa Migration Routes in Historical Contexts," in D.M. Srinivasan (ed.), *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kusāna World* (2007): 55–94; and *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks* (2011).

Christian Oberländer is Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. His research interests focus on the history of Japan, including

Japanese science and technology as well as Japan's international relations. His recent publications include "The Rise of Western 'Scientific Medicine' in Japan: Bacteriology and Beriberi," in M. Low (ed.), *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond* (2005) and "The Introduction of 'German Medicine' in Japan in the 1870s: 'Heteronomous Modernization' and 'Internal Colonization'," in S. Sakai et al. (eds.), *Transaction in Medicine & Heteronomous Modernization: Germany, Japan, Korea and Taiwan* (2009).

Stratis Papaioannou is Associate Professor of Classics and Director of the Modern Greek Studies Program at Brown University. He works on Byzantine literature with an emphasis on discursive aesthetics and autobiography. Recent publications include "Byzantine Mirrors: Self-Reflection in Medieval Greek Writing," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 64 (2010) 81–102; *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (2012); and "Rhetoric and the Philosopher in Byzantium," in K. Ierodiakonou and B. Byden (eds.), *Essays on Byzantine Philosophy* (in press). He is working on an edition of Michael Psellos's letters.

Kurt A. Raaflaub is David Herlihy University Professor and Professor Emeritus of Classics and History at Brown University. His main fields of interest are the social, political, and intellectual history of archaic and classical Greece and of the Roman republic, and the comparative history of the ancient world. His books include *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* (2004); *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece* (2007, coauthored); *War and Peace in the Ancient World* (2007, ed.), and *Epic and History* (2010, coedited). He is currently working on a book on *Early Greek Political Thought in Its Mediterranean Context*, and editing the *Landmark Caesar*.

Robert Rollinger is Professor of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Leopold-Franzens University of Innsbruck and currently also Finland Distinguished Professor and Research Director at the University of Helsinki. His main areas of research are the history of the Ancient Near East and the Achaemenid Empire, contacts between the Aegean World and the Ancient Near East, and ancient historiography. Recent publications include *Continuity of Empire (?). Assyria, Media, Persia* (coedited, 2003); *Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction* (coedited, 2004); and *Herodotus and the Persian Empire* (coedited, 2011). He is editor of the Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to the Achaemenid Empire* (forthcoming).

Thomas Schneider is Professor of Egyptology and Near Eastern Studies at the University of British Columbia. His main areas of research are Egyptian interconnections with the Levant and the Near East, Egyptian history and chronology, Egyptian historical phonology, history of Egyptology. He has published books on Asian names in Egyptian sources of the New Kingdom (1992) and foreigners in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom and the Hyksos Period (1998), and is the

founder and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Egyptian History*, and the editor-in-chief of the series "Culture and History of the Ancient Near East" and the journal *Near Eastern Archaeology*.

Romila Thapar is Professor Emerita at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Her work has focused on the history, historical thinking, and historical writing of early India. Her many books, for which she has received a wide range of academic distinctions, include *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (1961/2012); *From Lineage to State* (1984); *Interpreting Early India* (1992); *Cultural Pasts* (2000); *Early India* (2002); *Somantha: The Many Voices of a History* (2004); and *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India* (2013).

Theo van den Hout is Professor of Hittite and Anatolian Languages at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary* since 2000. Besides his work on the dictionary, his personal interests focus on ancient record management, the nature and function of Hittite tablet collections, and literacy in Hittite society. Recent publications include *The Life and Times of Hattusili III and Tuthaliya IV* (ed., 2006); "Institutions, Vernaculars, Publics: The Case of Second Millennium Anatolia," in S. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*, 221–62 (2007); and *The Elements of Hittite* (2011).

Introduction

Kurt A. Raaflaub

All ancient peoples remembered the past and thought about it, integrated such memories into their social structures, customs, or rituals, used them to define and shape identities, recorded the deeds of ancestors or great leaders and stories about their origins and important events, composed songs or performed plays about past events, or even developed forms of historical writing. Historical consciousness is one of the hallmarks of developed civilizations. Yet the forms in which such thoughts and concerns found expression vary greatly from culture to culture.

The habit of recording and even writing history emerged independently in various parts of the ancient world: in China, in Mesopotamia and Egypt, in the Americas among the Maya. Other societies picked up earlier impulses, transformed them, adapted them to their needs, and carried them further: Japan, Israel, Greece and Rome, or the Aztecs. In states ruled by kings, history usually took the form of records that celebrated military campaigns, victories, and other royal achievements, of genealogies and king lists, or even of prophecies and omens. They were eternalized in stone or bronze inscriptions that were set up in prominent places (sanctuaries, funeral monuments, or palaces) or carved into rocks at significant landmarks. Such records might be purely textual, purely pictorial, or combine both; they are prominent, for example, in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia, and among the Maya. They might also be written on perishable materials (like tortoise shells in China, papyrus scrolls in Egypt, or codices in Mesoamerica) or on clay tablets (in Mesopotamia). Finally, they might be integrated into narrated history in various genres and of varying complexity (especially in China or Greece) or preserved, though eventually profoundly

transformed and reinterpreted in the course of oral transmission over centuries, in myth, heroic epic, or some of the "historical narratives" of the Hebrew Bible.

If the forms differed, so did the purpose and function of past and history in all these societies. Let me look more closely for a moment, without anticipating too much, at one example, that of Greco-Roman antiquity. Whatever the influences the Greeks absorbed from Egypt and West Asia, their historical writing evolved out of a background of heroic epic song and story-telling. In a world of small, independent, open, and competitive communities that were exposed, in the late sixth and fifth centuries BCE, to major challenges first by the mighty Persian empire, then by the fierce rivalry between two Greek imperial systems (of Sparta and Athens), the Greeks developed a new form of historical writing that focused on the drama of politics and war, was adorned by speeches, and increasingly based on explicit methodological and theoretical considerations. This tradition of historical writing continued through Hellenistic and Roman antiquity (in the latter enriched by local traditions) and the (western European, Byzantine, and early Islamic) Middle Ages into early modern times.

Our modern understanding of the nature of historiography, however, is based on principles emerging in the nineteenth century. Whether or not we still believe in it, the ideal formulated by the German historian Leopold von Ranke, that the historian is obliged to reconstruct history "as it actually happened" (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), implied a strong belief in the historian's commitment to objectivity. The ancient Greeks and Romans too emphasized "truth" in writing history, but their concept of truth differed greatly from that of objectivity. Apart from preserving the memory of great deeds and entertaining their readers with fascinating stories about such deeds, Greek and Roman historians pursued "ulterior motives" that served ideological or didactic purposes. In a view expressed forcefully by Thucydides and Polybius, history represents a repository of past experiences that, if interpreted perceptively and presented effectively, can serve as a "possession for ever," an instruction for life. The human condition, Thucydides postulates (*History* 1.22.4), offers a constant element in the bewildering kaleidoscope of historical events. By observing patterns in human (individual or collective) reaction to recurring challenges, by determining how and why others succeeded or failed, one can make history useful and prepare oneself for the challenges of life or of a political career. Roman authors writing about the rise and crisis of the Republic, wrote "exemplary history," highlighting models of virtuous and vile behavior to be emulated and avoided. Cicero's principle of *historia magistra vitae* ("history as a teacher for life") was generally accepted in both Greek and Roman antiquity, although the Greeks understood this principle more strictly on a political, the Romans equally on a moral level.

This is but one example. The Greco-Roman tradition has dominated western understanding of history and the writing of history, although we are only now becoming fully aware of how radically different from our own the Greeks' and Romans' perceptions of the function of history really was. And any focus on historiography unduly privileges one form of historical awareness and expression over many others. It is also only in recent decades that we have become more fully

conscious of the wealth of other forms of dealing with the past that pervaded Greek and Roman societies. Nor have classicists, with few exceptions, taken advantage of the heuristic potential inherent in comparison with other civilizations. True, recent scholarship has engaged in fascinating comparisons of Greek and early Chinese historiography, two genres developing at almost the same time but, as far as we know, completely unrelated to each other. Yet again, written, literary history represents only one aspect of dealing with the past. Other highly developed ancient societies did not write history; some (like the Inca) did not even develop a formal script. But the past was no less important to them, and they found many ways to integrate it, express it, and use it for their own social, political, religious, and ideological purposes.

Broad cross-cultural comparisons of the ways ancient societies dealt with the past have been rare. An important exception is a volume that was recently published by Oxford University Press (Feldherr and Hardy 2011). The present volume complements rather than reduplicates it in three important ways, among others. First, it throws its net more widely, including societies that chronologically transcend the chronological limits usually chosen for "antiquity" (somewhere between the emergence of Constantine's Christian empire and that of Islam) but whose historical thinking and writing are deeply rooted in "ancient" traditions (such as Japanese, Buddhist, Byzantine, or early Islamic historiography). We have also included societies that are structurally more closely related to "ancient" societies than to their early modern contemporaries (the Maya, Aztecs, and Native North American Nations).

Second, as its broad title indicates, our volume deliberately does not limit itself to historical writing but approaches the phenomenon of "narratives about the past" much more broadly, thus conveying to the reader some of the wealth of forms and means by which the past was preserved and used in the great variety of cultures that make up the world of ancient or early civilizations.

And third, the contributors to this volume make an effort to bring out the potential of illumination and enhanced understanding inherent in comparison across a wide range of cultures. Although pursuing lines of investigation that seem most productive in their areas, they also pay attention, to the extent possible, to some common questions, such as: What role did the past play in a society's thought and imagination, its rituals and customs? What significance did it have for the self-understanding or identity, and the self-presentation of a society? Who (what types of individuals or classes) were interested in the past? How was the past imagined, represented, and recorded? What techniques or institutions existed to preserve memory? How and by whom were such memories or records preserved, perpetuated, and communicated to the public (and what public)? What were the sources of (economic, social, and intellectual) support of such practitioners? Were they tied into specific social or political structures, or did they (some) preserve their independence? What genres were developed to commemorate, perform, record, or write about the past? Were private forms or genres distinguishable from public ones? What purposes did the preservation of memory or the recording of the past serve? What interests or ideologies influenced such activities? If historiography existed as a specific literary genre, what were its characteristics? How did this genre

evolve over time? How did it interact with other genres of literature or with other traditions of historical thinking and writing (both within and outside this particular society)? Of course, many more questions could be and have been asked, and full coverage is impossible in the space provided here. Still, we hope that attention to these questions helps give this volume more internal coherence than might otherwise be the case.

In the arrangement of the chapters, we have tried to indicate and trace lines of development: from Chinese and Indian to Japanese and Buddhist, from Mesopotamian to Hittite and Achaemenid Persian, from Greek to Roman, early Christian, Byzantine, and early Islamic, and from Maya to Aztec thinking and writing about history. Especially in the case of the Hebrew Bible, placement in a sequence of traditions is difficult to decide: in so many ways, it reflects Mesopotamian heritages and influences, but the historical books seem close to traditions initiated by the Greeks as well. Moreover, sadly, due to the vicissitudes of scholars' lives and obligations, two important chapters were not written: on Hellenistic historiography and on the role and recording of the past in Inca society. Into these topics, and into others mentioned in this brief introduction, the short list of suggested readings (below) offers an initial avenue.

<div align="center">***</div>

Suggested Readings

Dillery, J. 2011. "Hellenistic Historiography." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011: 171–218.
Feldherr, A., and G. Hardy (eds.). 2011. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing,* I: *Beginnings to AD 600.* Oxford.
Konstan, D., and K.A. Raaflaub (eds.). 2010. *Epic and History.* Malden, MA and Oxford.

Marincola, J. (ed.). 2007. *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography.* Malden, MA and Oxford.

McEwan, G.F. 2008. *The Incas: New Perspectives.* New York.

Quilter, J., and G. Urton (eds.). 2002. *Narrative Threads: Accounting and Recounting in Andean Khipu.* Austin.

Raaflaub, K.A. 2010. "Ulterior Motives in Ancient Historiography: What Exactly, and Why?" In L. Foxhall, H.-J. Gehrke, and N. Luraghi (eds.), *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*, 189–210. Stuttgart.

Shankman, S., and S. Durrant. 2000. "Before and after Philosophy: Thucydides and Sima Qian." In Shankman and Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, 79–156. London and New York.

Vansina, J. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History.* London.

1

On Being Historical

David Carr

The conference on "Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World" brought together specialists from many areas of ancient studies. I was asked to contribute a theoretical perspective based on my work in the philosophy of history. As a nonspecialist often embarrassed, frankly, by the lack of concreteness and the lofty generality often (correctly) associated with my (non)discipline, I found this task daunting before the conference; it is even more so afterwards. I was overwhelmed by the richness of detail and the depth of reflection evident in the contributions of the other participants in this conference. Can the philosophy of history really contribute anything of value to this discussion?

Before I sink too deep into self-deprecation – such Socratic modesty is often thought disingenuous – I will assert that a general philosophical perspective can be of great value, provided it is not too lofty. By this I mean that it can be useful to gather together the various strands of historical inquiry and venture some general observations about what they all share and how they differ. It can also be helpful to bring to the surface what they all, at some level, take for granted, perhaps without realizing it. But the philosophical reflection has to draw from their work, not vice versa. Whether historians have anything to gain from the sort of reflection I propose, only they can say. For my part I can only say that my own thinking about history was deeply affected and enriched by what I learned from this conference.

"Philosophy of history," as a coherent set of questions and concerns, emerged in the modern West at about the same time that "history" itself became a distinct and respectable academic discipline, that is, in the early nineteenth century. It has also

been conceptually dependent on the knowledge provided by the new discipline of history, and this is reflected in the two kinds of questions the philosophy of history has asked:

First, given the past as we now reliably know it, thanks to the professional historians, does the course of history as a whole make sense? – that is, does it make moral sense? Is it a jumble of events without moral meaning, or worse, as it often seems (and as Gibbon thought), is it just a sequence of follies and atrocities? Hegel famously wrote: "But as we contemplate history as the slaughter-bench, on which the happiness of nations, the wisdom of states, and the virtues of individuals were sacrificed, the question necessarily comes to mind: What was the ultimate goal for which these monstrous sacrifices were made?" (Hegel 1988: 24). This search for moral sense can rightly be called metaphysical, and perhaps even theological, as pursued by Hegel and others.

A second line of inquiry is not metaphysical but epistemological. Given the past as we know it, again thanks to the historical profession, *how* do we know it, how reliable is our knowledge, and how far does it extend? What is the evidence on which such knowledge is based, and what inferences must be performed to arrive at it? While the metaphysical/moral/theological approach to history has been denounced as "speculative" and empty, the epistemology of history, begun by the neo-Kantians in the nineteenth century and continued by the analytic philosophers of the twentieth, has achieved some measure of respectability.

But there is a deeper question not addressed by these two philosophical approaches, one whose answer underlies what they ask. Both approaches assume not only that knowledge of the past is given to us by historians, but also that the past matters to us enough to make us interested in knowing about it. But why does the past matter to us at all? Either explicitly or implicitly, many of the contributions to this conference raise this question. It is the main question behind the approach to history that I outlined in my presentation, where I focused on the concept of *Geschichtlichkeit.* This broadly theoretical or philosophical question, which derives from the historical school, from Dilthey and from the phenomenological and hermeneutical traditions of the twentieth century, differs from both the metaphysics of history and the epistemology of historical knowledge. Its question is not *What is* history? or *How do we know* history? but rather *What is it to be historical*? Dilthey wrote that "we are historical beings first, before we are observers of history, and only because we are the former do we become the latter … The historical world is always there, and the individual not only observes it from the outside but is intertwined with it" (Dilthey 2002: 297). Dilthey and his successors think that the past matters to us because we are somehow deeply historical beings, and they want to know what it means to be a "historical being," and in what sense we are intertwined with history. They want to know how history is encountered, how it enters our lives, and in what forms of consciousness and experience it does so. Thus they are asking questions not so much about historical knowledge as about both historical experience and historical being. And they want to know why this should lead us to become observers of history. Rather than assuming our interest

in the past, they are asking why we should be interested in the past at all. In the original version of my paper, I took up these questions and sketched very general answers to at least some of them, following a broadly phenomenological path. In this published version, I want to ask how my findings might square with some of the things I learned at this conference.

Christian Oberländer remarked at the end of his paper (though no longer of his published chapter, which has a somewhat different focus), "All in all, we find that in ancient Japan – as in other ancient societies – there was no particular interest in history as such." On the surface this comment might seem to undermine the basic premise of the whole conference, which is that "thinking, recording, and writing history" did take place in the many cultures of the ancient world discussed by the participants. But the crucial part of Oberländer's statement, I think, is found in the words "as such." To be interested in "history as such" is to believe that the past matters for its own sake, and that is why it is worthy of knowing. This is a default assumption, I would suggest, of the modern era in which the discipline of history exists.

The emergence of this discipline in the nineteenth century is one expression of the fact that the past did in fact come to matter as such and to be considered worth knowing. But one of the great lessons of this conference for me was the recognition that it has not always been so. If there was indeed thinking, recording, and writing of history in many societies discussed at the conference, it was because the past mattered, not "as such," but for some reason beyond itself. In other words, it is not enough to say that the past simply "matters"; one must ask *how* it matters. This is the question implied by Oberländer's remark.

This is a question that was addressed either directly or indirectly by many conference participants. We discovered that in ancient societies the past was appealed to for many reasons: to establish or reestablish *legitimacy* for a particular ruler or class or family of rulers (Schneider on Egypt, Oberländer on Japan); to trace the *origin* of a people, practice, or institution (Brettler on ancient Israel); to find *stability* in the face of rapid or incomprehensible change (Grethlein on ancient Greece); as part of *ritual* observances (Papaioannou on Byzantium, Durrant on China); to provide *models* of meritorious conduct (Neelis on Buddhism, Mehl on Rome). Thus the past is even seen to have purely instrumental value, especially in the service of political power. In its ritualistic, religious, or commemorative sense, it serves needs that perhaps lie beyond the political, helping to anchor society in the world in the face of constant threats of dissolution.

Part of the modern "historical consciousness" that leads us to take an interest in the past for its own sake has to do with the *difference* of the past. It matters *because* it is different from the present; its otherness is what appeals to us. By contrast, according to Mehl, "The Romans were interested in the past, not because they regarded it as being different from the present but, on the contrary, because they considered both qualitatively equal." And this view would be shared by all those who look to the past for stability and for protection against contingency. If past and present manifest continuity rather than change, then we have more reason to hope for the same in the future.

The idea that the past is significantly different from the present, and that the future is different from the present as well, seems to be found in the Jewish concern with origins. While Marc Brettler's chapter on the historical character of the Hebrew Bible identifies many purposes behind the ancient texts – the search for legitimacy, political propaganda, religious advocacy – it stresses above all their etiological character: the search for origins and explanations of the present in an account of a distant and not-so-distant past, in divine and human actions. The search for causes is notably lacking in many of the other traditions, and is in some ways incompatible with a view of the past in terms of constant and unchanging patterns. Thus (in a paper that was ultimately not offered for publication) Marc Zender commented that Mayan texts concern questions of *who, what, where, when*, but never *why*? The emphasis on difference – change – rather than sameness goes hand in hand with the stress on etiology. Brettler, in addition, makes much use of the term "narrative" in describing the biblical texts, a term also used especially of Greek or Chinese accounts but conspicuously lacking, it must be noted, in those of many other traditions, and the concept of narrative is conceptually linked to change that occurs over time. The importance in Christian thought of unique, historical events, narrated after the fact, in addition to the need for continuity with Old Testament prophecy (Eve-Marie Becker), seems to be continued in the Byzantine concern (Papaioannou) about its Greco-Roman as well as Christian and Judaic past. If we add to this the Islamic historical writings described at the conference by Chase Robinson and in the published chapter by Andrew Marsham, we seem to find support for the widely accepted view that the Western concern with history "as such" has its origin in Judaic scriptural writings and in the Christian and Islamic traditions that appropriated them and integrated them into their own thought.

Of course, this contrast between history "as such" and the instrumental view of the past should not blind us to the fact that the past has been used for political, ideological, and social purposes in all traditions, including our own, and continues to be so used up to the present day. Still, the emergence of the interest in the past for its own sake, in the historical consciousness of nineteenth-century Europe, reveals its closeness to the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, for which the differentness of the past mattered, or rather, in which the past mattered *because* it was different. This closeness is of course interestingly doubled: the modern concern with the past *resembles* that of its ancient roots; but it is also focused, at least at first and in large part, *on* those ancient roots as precisely the past that matters for it.

With these reflections in mind, I now turn to the main lines of the account of "historicity," or of "being historical," that I presented in my original paper. As I stated earlier, this conception was itself derived from the historical consciousness of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and my presentation of it is meant to articulate such consciousness as a background for considering how the past "matters." This account is meant to be, in the broadest sense, phenomenological, that is, a largely first-person description of experience.

As phenomenologists like Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty have maintained, human subjectivity instantiates a special sort of relationship to time. Just as I am not merely in space as an object is in a container, so I am not just in time in the sense of occurring at a particular moment, or sequence of moments. To be sure, I do exist in an ever-changing Now, and my experience is a sequence of Nows, but it is much more than that. Nor am I merely a temporally persisting substance that bears the changing effects of time as its properties or predicates, like a thing. Nor yet do I merely accumulate "traces" of what passes, like footprints on a path. These traditional metaphors for dealing with the self in time contain some truth, but they are inadequate.

Like the Here in relation to the space I perceive and inhabit, the Now is a vantage point from which I survey a kind of temporal field encompassing past and future. Memory and expectation make possible an ongoing experience through which past and future form the horizon or background from which the present stands out; together they give meaning to the present moment in which I experience or act. I hold onto a past as I project a future before me. These are essential features of human experience. It is not as if I exist in the present and just happen to have the capacity occasionally to envisage the future and remember the past. Rather, human experience just *is* a kind of temporal reach or stretch, as Heidegger (1996: 343) called it. Husserl (1991: 33) spoke of the horizons of retention and protention that constitute the continuity of experience, and are to be distinguished from acts of explicitly "thinking about" the future or "recollecting" the past. These latter elements of my experience may be absent; the continuity may not.

In space I am not just a passive perceiver but also an agent, moving and acting in the world around me. So too in time: the future I have before me is not merely anticipated or expected but also projected and affected by the actions in which I am engaged. Present and past are not merely passively given but actively construed and interpreted as situations conducive to and calling for certain actions. Like space, then, time is a practical field in which I maneuver and whose contours I shape by my actions.

In this practical context the unity of the subject in time is not a given or a presupposition, nor is it a product of my past experiences, but is itself a kind of project or achievement in which I construct my identity out of the actions I perform. But I define myself not only in relation to my past and future, and my temporal coherence, but also in relation to others. And this is where we come to the other dimension of history, the social context. We move from our being in time to our being with others, from subjectivity to intersubjectivity.

The first-person character of our description so far might suggest that the discussion of my relations with others would start with how the *I* confronts the *Thou*. Traditional accounts, phenomenological and otherwise, of the social aspect of human existence have taken their start from the situation in which I experience the other face-to-face. They have asked questions about how the Other can be an object for me which is nevertheless a subject, how I can know the other's thoughts and experiences when all I perceive is the body, and more generally how I relate

and have access to a subjectivity which is not my own. These are perfectly legitimate questions, and they are especially important if one wants to consider also the ethical dimension of intersubjectivity. These questions lie behind the classic formulation of the I–Thou relation in Martin Buber's work (1958); and even Levinas (1969), who is critical of many aspects of this whole approach, arguably still takes it as his point of departure. But it should be recognized that this approach concerns only one mode of being with and relating to others.

Husserl and Heidegger actually took a different approach to being with others and this approach was integrated into their concepts of historicity. Heidegger begins with the everyday, precognitive, practical world, and this world is social through and through. But here we encounter others first and foremost not as objects to be known but through common projects in which we are engaged. The others are experienced as coworkers and coparticipants in the ongoing undertakings that give meaning and structure to our common surroundings (Heidegger 1996: 110).

Husserl's approach to intersubjectivity initially took its point of departure with the face-to-face or I–Thou situation as a phenomenological problem. But he discovered another approach to being with others in his late work when dealing with what he called the crisis of European science (Husserl 1970). Husserl's treatment of consciousness had from the start taken scientific cognition as a primary focus, asking questions about how we move from the world of perception to the scientifically warranted judgments that make up our theoretical disciplines, including humanistic and psychological as well as natural sciences. For the most part Husserl's approach to these questions seemed to make the assumption that the individual subject, in pursuit of scientific knowledge, could simply transcend the limitations of its concrete social situation and somehow move directly to the truth. What he finally appreciated in his late work on the crisis of the sciences is that theoretical inquiry is necessarily an intersubjective affair. He recognized that, in the pursuit of theoretical truth, the individual always inherits this pursuit as an existing and ongoing activity of the society in which she or he takes it up. The problems and questions of science do not come out of the blue, but out of a tradition of ongoing inquiry. The individual not only inherits the questions but often builds on the answers already obtained by others as the basis for further work. Even when the primary motivation for inquiry is criticism of the existing solutions to problems, as is so often the case in science, rather than acceptance of them, these prior solutions furnish the context and background for ongoing inquiry. Thus a cognitive endeavor like science, even though it is pursued by individuals, owes its undertaking in each case, as well as its forward motion, to the social context in which it exists.

These considerations cast science in a new light for Husserl, though they are not isolated in the philosophy of science. In fact, they resemble some of the insights of pragmatists like Dewey before him, even as they foreshadow later postempiricist developments in the analytic philosophy of science. What is important for our purposes, however, is that they facilitate a new approach to intersubjectivity that parallels and complements Heidegger's treatment of being with others. What is

more, this approach turns out to extend beyond the realm of scientific inquiry, which can be seen as but one instance of a larger pattern.

How should we characterize one's relation to others in a shared scientific (including historical) inquiry? They are encountered as fellows, colleagues, coparticipants in a common project. What counts about them for me is not their inner life or their total existence, but merely their engagement in an activity that is oriented toward a goal I share. More is shared than just the goal, of course: there are explicit or tacit standards and rules about how inquiry is to be conducted; shared notions of what counts as a valid contribution to the inquiry, and much more. As we know from the case of science, the others are not confined to my immediate colleagues or lab partners, but include other members of the profession at large, especially other specialists in the same field. Clearly the standard terms for the intersubjective encounter do not apply here: the other as alter ego, *autrui*, appearing in a face-to-face confrontation, object of empathy or sympathy, returning my *regard* and putting me to shame or reducing me to an object, à la Sartre – all these terms seem inappropriate to the situation at hand.

To describe correctly and fully understand this relation to others, characterized by coparticipation or common endeavor, we need to introduce an indispensable new term, namely that of the group to which I and the others belong. It is precisely as fellow members of a group that others are encountered in this way, and so we need to explore what "group" means in this context, to understand how it exists, how far it extends, and so on. What we have in mind here is not merely an objective collection of individuals, united by some common characteristic like size, shape, hair color, or complexion. The relevant sense of group for our purposes is united from the inside, not from the outside. The word most often used to convey this sense of group is *community*, *Gemeinschaft* (sometimes contrasted with *Gesellschaft*, society). These terms derive from the common or the shared, but this must be understood in a special way.

If the community makes possible a certain kind of encounter with others, how do I encounter the community itself? It too is not primarily an object standing over against me as something to be perceived or known, as if I were an anthropologist or sociologist. I relate to it rather in terms of membership, adherence or belonging. The sign of this relation is my use of the "we" to characterize the subject of certain experiences and actions. The possibility that the community can emerge as a "we"-subject affords a way of understanding not only the nature of the community but also the peculiar character of being with others that makes it up.

One thing to be noted is how such a community relates to the possibility of phenomenological understanding. Phenomenology is characterized, we noted, by the first-person character of its descriptions. By shifting our attention from the "I" to the "We," it is not necessary to leave the first-person point of view behind; we merely take up the plural rather than the singular first person. This shift from the I to the We reveals an interesting connection between twentieth-century phenomenology and Hegel's phenomenology, a connection that has always been murky and little understood. In the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* the author introduces

the key notion of his work, that of *Geist*, by calling it "an I that is We, a We that is I," in other words a plural subject (Hegel 1977: 110). It is Geist that forms the true subject of the dialectical forms that Hegel describes in his phenomenology, and which later figures as the central concept in his philosophy of history. Hegel is often criticized for reifying Geist, giving it a life and a mind of its own independently of that of the individuals involved, and this criticism may in part be justified. But it is possible to have a more modest or restricted sense of the ontology of the We. It exists, we can say, just as long as its constituent individuals say and think "we." In this sense it is entirely dependent on the individuals that make it up. Thus we can frame the very controversial notion of the collective subject in a way that avoids a dubious ontological reification and stays close to our experience of social existence. Here there is nothing more common in social life, and nothing more important, than the membership of the individual in communities of various kinds. This can be subjected to phenomenological description.

Such description involves reflecting on those occasions and experiences in which I identify myself with a group or community by enlisting, so to speak, in the "we." It happens when the experience or action in which I am engaged is attributed not just to me but to "us," when I take myself to be a participant in a collective action or experience. But the action or experience must be enduring or ongoing, and with it the existence of the collective subject, the "we." To say that we build a house is not equivalent to saying that I build a house, you build a house, she builds a house. The common project is articulated into subtasks distributed among the participants such that the agent cannot be any of the members singly but only the group as such.

To say that I enlist in or participate in such collective endeavors or experiences is to say that I identify myself with the group in question, and this sense of "identifying oneself" deserves our attention. As we said before, the identity of the subject is not a given but constitutes itself over time as a sort of project, and I identify myself in relation to others. This is often taken to mean that I gain my identity in opposition to others, but it is also true that one asserts one's identity by joining with others. This brings us into the territory of "identity" as it is used in such phrases as "identity crisis" and "identity politics." As an individual I identify myself with certain groups and thus construe my identity in terms of my belonging. Among these are family, profession, religion, nationality, culture, etc. "We are getting closer to a cure for Parkinson's," says the medical researcher, even though she may not be involved in this project directly. "We believe in the virgin birth," says the Christian. "We landed on the moon in 1969," says the earthbound contemporary. And who are we, in this last case? Here, perhaps, we speak on behalf of the human race as a whole.

This is the same sense of identity that has been a subject of some controversy between communitarians and liberals in political philosophy. The former (Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and others) proclaim the value for the individual and for social order of the individual's rootedness in the community, and warn us against the rootlessness of modern society; the latter (for example, Habermas [1979],

and more recently Anthony Appiah [2006]) defend the values of individuality, "post-conventional identity," and cosmopolitanism against what they see as the closedness and conservatism of the communitarian approach. These debates are certainly relevant to what I am trying to do here, but it is also important to see the differences. They are normative, for one thing: arguments about which forms of social and political organization best suit human needs. Both sides admit that community identification exists and plays an important role in human life, for good or ill. Also, as such notions as "post-conventional identity" and cosmopolitanism indicate, even the liberals envisage a form of collective identity and solidarity, as long as it is based on political principles rather than such traditional forms as ethnicity, language, or nationality.

Thus individuals identify themselves with groups that range from small and intimate to larger and more encompassing. But it must not be thought that these groups nest easily inside each other like a series of concentric circles. Groups criss-cross one another, and I identify myself sometimes more with one than another, depending on circumstances. Furthermore, participation in one may not always be compatible with participation in another. Family may conflict with profession, class with country, or religion with civic duty, to name only a few of the classic conflicts. These conflicts can be personal and psychological, "identity crises" in which the individual is torn between conflicting commitments and allegiances; and through the individuals involved the conflicts can be social as well, pitting groups against each other in collective action and enmity. The intersubjective relations involved here take a new twist: I relate to my fellows as members of the same community, with whom I say "we." And I relate to others not just as other individuals but as members of an opposing group: "them" versus "us."

Much more could be said about various aspects and implications of the We-relation, but I want to turn now to its relevance to our topic, historicity. We have been looking for a connection between time and social existence that could be described from the first-person point of view as the experience of historical existence. I want to contend that it is in the experience of membership in communities that time is genuinely historical for us. As a member of a community I become part of a We-subject with an experience of time that extends back before my birth and can continue even after my death. Since the We is experienced as genuinely subjective, it has the same sort of temporality as the I-subject. That is, it is not just an entity persisting in time, or a series of nows, but occupies a prospective–retrospective temporal field encompassing past and future. Just as we attribute agency and experience to the we-subject, so we can speak of its expectations and its memories. History is sometimes spoken of as "society's memory," the manner in which it retains its past such that the past plays an enduring role in the life of the present. To put it another way: we noted before that the present is for the I-subject the vantage point which gives access to a temporal field encompassing past and future; likewise, for the we-subject, the present functions as a similar vantage point. But the field that is opened up in this case is much broader. It is to this field that I gain access in virtue of my membership and participation in a community.

But there is more to it than this. Engaged in a community by using the term "we," I enjoy a special relationship with my fellow members, as we have seen. But these fellow members are temporally differentiated in significant ways. Alfred Schutz (1967: 208) spoke of the difference between contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, but this distinction is much too simple. My contemporaries are further differentiated into elder and younger, distinctions that are more than just chronological. In family, ethnic, and professional contexts, elders are traditionally considered more knowledgeable and more experienced, and act as parents, guides, and mentors to the younger. Professional relations often mimic family relations, as in Germany, where the dissertation director is called the *Doktorvater*. Just as important as this benign relationship is the agonistic, indeed, Oedipal, struggle in which the young rebel against the domination of the old, break away, and establish their independence. So often, of course, this classic youthful rebellion, instead of securing the emancipation of the individual from the group, only reveals the individual's deeper, inextricable dependence and adherence.

In any case, these intergenerational relations and tensions show that being a member of a community means belonging to a temporally continuous entity whose temporality exceeds that of my own subjectivity. With regard to the past, its reach gradually expands in a kind of relay-form from elders to ancestors and predecessors who came "before my time," that is, before my experience and before my birth. One way of thinking of this relation is to think of the circle or sequence of acquaintances. This is the popular idea of "degrees of separation," which are also degrees of indirect connection. Regarded synchronically, this connection relates each of us to contemporaries with whom we have no other connection; but it is also characteristic of our relations with members of the communities to which we belong. Seen in a diachronic frame, this circle of acquaintance extends very rapidly into the past. Living in the twenty-first century, I knew a member of my family (my great-grandmother), born during the American Civil War, who herself knew her grandparents, born in the eighteenth century. I am thus related by one degree of separation/connection, by indirect acquaintance, if you will, to my eighteenth-century forebears.

With such examples, and with such familiar uses of the term "we," I hope to convey the sense in which, as members of families and other communities, we have a direct and lived relationship to history. To be sure, this direct relationship includes much more that this. It extends even to our physical surroundings, where the very contours of the land, the patterns of roads and streets, and many of the buildings we inhabit and often even the furniture we use, are older than we are. But even this physical world is part of the human world of overlapping communities with which we identify ourselves. One could say much more about the role of the past in ethnic and national identities, political and religious allegiances, which are such a decisive force, for good and ill, in the contemporary world. But the general point is that it is in solidarity, membership, and participation with others in communities that the past is most alive and vivid for us. It is here that it functions as part of our identity as individuals and enters into our lives and everyday experience.

Obviously we are moving here in the realm of popular mentality and even mythology. But it is here that historicity is most vivid and efficacious in our sense of who we are. It operates with different intensity and in vastly different ways in different social and historical contexts. We Americans, of course, are blessed or cursed with a history than lends itself generously to popular mythology. Unlike many modern states we trace our identity to a fairly clearcut "birth of a nation," itself mythologized in the early stages of cinema, our most enduring contribution to popular culture. We owe this birth to "founding fathers" – a miraculous birth indeed, since it seems to have occurred without the help of founding mothers. Or alternatively, but still with the aura of a family drama, our origins are found in an act of youthful rebellion against the "mother country," leading up to the adoption of a written constitution that begins with the words "we, the people." Four score and seven years later, we were engaged in a great civil war testing whether our nation could endure. Abraham Lincoln's famous speech at Gettysburg in 1863, which I am paraphrasing here, uses the "patriotic 'we'" in the grand tradition of political rhetoric and funeral oratory that can be traced back to Pericles and Gorgias, as Gary Wills (1992) has shown. The success of political leadership is the capacity to translate this rhetorical device into political reality. Wars and other crises, of course, lend themselves to the realization of the "we." And when we have the sense of living through history, in traumatic and pivotal moments like the breach of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, or the attacks of September 11, 2001, we are communalized by the shock of the unexpected and the uncertainty of the future. The American presidential election of November, 2008, and the inauguration of January, 2009, had similar, communalizing effects. No doubt the communities most galvanized by the above-mentioned events were the Germans and the Americans, respectively. But they captured such worldwide attention that their communalizing effects were felt far beyond those countries. There is no doubt that a certain international, communal solidarity was involved.

These examples remind us again of the temporality of historical existence. They reveal that such existence is often as much a matter of the future as of the past, as Heidegger argued (1996: 297). But we usually identify historicity with the manner in which the past plays a role in the present. What my analysis shows, I think, is that it is primarily as members of communities of various sorts that we experience the reality of the past in our present lives. It is here that such terms as "tradition," "inheritance," or "legacy" come into play. In the agency of the "we," the past is not just passively given; we take it over or, as Heidegger put it, we "hand down" to ourselves the legacy of the past (1996: 351). Communal existence is active in many ways, but a constant feature of its activity is the manner in which it appropriates its past. That this is an activity is evident from the varying forms this takes. We select from the past what we wish to take over and neglect what we wish to forget. Indeed, remembering and forgetting are central activities by which communities constitute themselves. Remembering leads to commemoration and memorialization by which we celebrate our heroes and achievements in monuments and popular songs on

national holidays. The silence of forgetting can seek to evade responsibility for evils such as slavery or genocide; but it can in some cases have the beneficial effect of overcoming past resentments and grievances. Some communities remember too little; others remember too much.

Let us summarize the results of our phenomenology of historical existence. We exist historically by virtue of our participation in communities that predate and outlive our individual lives. Through the we-relation historical reality enters directly into our lived experience and becomes part of our identity. Our membership gives us access to a past, a tradition, and a temporal span that is not so much something we know about as something that is part of us. This is the primary sense in which we are, in Dilthey's sense (2002: 297), historical beings before we are observers of history; this is the sense in which we are "intertwined" with history. This phenomenology of history does not address itself directly to the traditional questions of the philosophy of history, questions of what history is in itself and of how we know it, though it can cast some indirect light on these questions. But it does address the question of why we should be interested in the past at all.

As we said, this account is drawn from the tradition of historical thinking that began in the nineteenth century and continued throughout the twentieth – extending perhaps even to the twenty-first. It expresses the well-known "historical consciousness" of that period, a period in which it can certainly be said that history "as such" mattered. I also claimed that such historical consciousness is itself rooted in the religious traditions of the West, so it certainly goes farther back than just the nineteenth century.

The question is whether this account can also throw light on other ways in which history mattered, ways that lie outside this tradition, some of which have come to light (at least for me) in the course of the conference preceding the publication of this volume. Is it broad enough to address the large question of how the past matters, and has done so, for human societies generally? In other words, is it provincial and limited, or can it apply generally across the broad spectrum of the human awareness of the past? Can non-Western views of the past be made to fit the pattern I have outlined here?

We are inclined, perhaps, to think of the temporal, social, and historical dimensions of human experience, as I have described them, to apply to all human societies and times. Certainly the philosophers on whom I have drawn, who articulated these conceptions, thought that they were describing universal human traits. There are reasons to be skeptical about this, however, and I am not going to attempt a real answer to this question. The issue is complicated, since just by virtue of being historians in the modern sense (or in my case being a philosopher of history), the participants in this conference belong to this putatively Western tradition, even if they are not literally "Western." So I leave the question unanswered, as perhaps the most important philosophical issue that has emerged from this conference.

References

Appiah, K.A. 2006. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York.

Buber, M. 1958. *I and Thou*. Trans. R.G. Smith. 2nd edn. New York.

Dilthey, W. 2002. *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*. Ed. R. Makkreel and F. Rodi. Princeton.

Habermas, J. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Trans. T. McCarthy. Boston.

Hegel, G.W.F. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford.

Hegel, G.W.F. 1988. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Trans. L. Rauch. Indianapolis.

Heidegger, M. 1996. *Being and Time*. Trans. J. Stambaugh. Albany, NY.

Husserl, E. 1970. *The Crisis of European Sciences*. Trans. D. Carr. Evanston.

Husserl, E. 1991. *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*. Trans. J. Brough. Boston.

Levinas, E. 1969. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburgh.

Schutz, A. 1967. *On the Phenomenology of the Social World*. Trans. G. Walsh and F. Lehnert. Evanston.

Wills, G. 1992. *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*. New York.

2

The Task and Ritual of Historical Writing in Early China

Stephen W. Durrant

Prologue: The Historical Context

The first comprehensive history of China, Sima Qian's (145?–89? BCE) *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji*), begins with the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi), who is usually dated to the middle of the third millennium BCE. However, Sima Qian himself expresses some skepticism about the accounts of this early figure, and no written records come from the time of the Yellow Emperor or his immediate successors. The accounts of this early, legendary period derive instead from much later when a vision of an ideal society was created and projected into the distant past, a past that was in all likelihood largely imagined.

Our knowledge of Chinese history is on more solid ground when we reach the last centuries of the second millennium BCE. Huge numbers of inscriptions on animal bones and turtle shells, all brief oracle texts, come from these centuries and are written in a script of such sophistication that we must presume it had a long developmental period, a presumption for which there is accumulating archaeological evidence. A list of kings of what is known as the Shang dynasty can be compiled from these oracle records, and that list conforms quite closely to Sima Qian's record of Shang kings from a thousand years later.

A people known as the Zhou, who came from the northwestern periphery of the Chinese world, conquered the Shang in the eleventh century BCE. While later Chinese records make heroes of these early Zhou rulers and see them as representing a highly cultured response to the "superstitious" Shang, archaeology does not

verify a radical cultural shift from the Shang to the Zhou (Falkenhausen 2006: 51). Written records begin to accumulate during the early Zhou. Inscriptions on ceremonial bronze vessels, which first appeared in the late Shang, increase in length, often memorializing some great deed performed by an aristocrat who sponsors the casting of the vessel. Furthermore, a number of poems and historical documents might be ascribed to the early Zhou, although the versions we have today were collected and probably reedited several centuries later.

The Zhou ruled by placing loyal followers, mostly members of the ruling household, in charge of various regions. Over time these bonds of loyalty weakened, and in 771 BCE rebels captured the Zhou capital in the west near modern-day Xi'an, forcing the Zhou court to relocate to Loyang in the east. While the dynasty continued on for more than five hundred years, it never exercised more than limited ritual and moral authority thereafter. Instead power gravitated to the individual domains, often called a bit grandiosely "states." This period, which is often divided into two parts, the Spring and Autumn (722–481) and the Warring States (453–221),[1] is characterized by interstate politics and conflict. The trend over time was towards fewer states, as small states were eradicated, and fiercer warfare. All of this culminated in 221 when one of the states, the Qin, destroyed its last competitor and unified China. This long period of political disunity brought with it a blossoming of Chinese thought and textual production. Foremost among the figures of this period was Confucius (551–479), who supposedly sifted and organized the records of the past into a classical legacy later known as the "Confucian Classics." While Confucius's role in this process has probably been exaggerated, his followers were undoubtedly important in the last centuries of the Zhou dynasty as both preservers and creators of the past, often projecting into a golden age of yore a peaceful, well-ordered contrast to the growing interstate conflict of their own time.

The harsh policies that enabled the Qin state to unify China also brought an end to the dynasty after little more than a decade of rule. The Qin work of political consolidation, however, was continued under the following Han dynasty, although regional power centers were only gradually and painfully suppressed. The Han was a period of territorial expansionism, and we may rightly speak of this period as the beginning of a Chinese empire. With this empire came cultural as well as political consolidation. Sima Qian's history was one of the most noteworthy of these efforts and was, from one point of view, an attempt to create a past, a coherent and common political ancestry, that could stand as a foundation for the emerging empire.[2]

Four Early, Influential Texts

Rather than presenting a thorough chronological survey of historical writing in ancient China, I will first briefly introduce four landmark texts and then consider how those texts and their interpretation established certain parameters that shaped the later tradition. The four texts are: *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan*), *Records of the Historian*, and *Han Historical Records*

(*Hanshu*). This list puts aside some extremely important historical writings, foremost among them the Zhou dynasty collection *Ancient Historical Documents* (*Shangshu*) that was listed as one of the "Five Confucian Classics" (Nylan 2001). My intention, however, is to focus primarily on a few features of a complex tradition that might be useful both for understanding that tradition and for drawing comparisons with historical writings elsewhere.

Spring and Autumn Annals (hereafter simply *Annals*) is a relatively short text made up of a series of dated entries extending from 722 to 481 BCE. Officials in the state of Lu, which was located on the Shandong Peninsula, presumably wrote these entries shortly after the funeral, battle, alliance meeting, diplomatic visit, or other event they record. In this respect *Annals* is more akin to the scribal records produced in Mesopotamia than, for example, the Biblical historical texts, none of which, Marc Brettler notes (in his chapter in this volume), "… is contemporaneous with the events it records." *Annals* gains prestige from the tradition that Confucius (551–479 BCE), a native of the state of Lu, supposedly edited the entries and imparted to them subtle political meaning, an issue to which we shall return later.

Zuo Commentary, probably compiled in the latter years of the fourth century BCE, was transmitted as a commentary to *Annals*. Apart from covering roughly the same period of time and being likewise arranged in a year-by-year format, *Zuo Commentary* could hardly be more different from *Annals*. It is approximately eleven times longer and comprises, in addition to short annalistic entries, fairly lengthy narratives and frequent complex speeches. *Zuo Commentary* is also retrospective history, looking back on events that occurred several centuries earlier, and reflects a developing belief that the past is readable and subject to interpretation and didactic elaboration (Li 1999: 30–32).

Records of the Historian, the next of our landmark texts, is a first in Chinese historical writing for at least two reasons: it is the earliest text with a historian as "a subjective figure," the self-identified author Sima Qian;[3] and it is the first attempt to present a comprehensive history of China rather than a history of a single period of time. As one might expect from a text that covers approximately 2500 years, it is three times longer than *Zuo Commentary*. Sima Qian also lays down a format for presenting history that will be followed in basic outline by all later official dynastic histories, of which there will ultimately be twenty-four, twenty-five, or twenty-six depending on which texts are included in this list. The first section of *Records of the Historian*, which contains twelve chapters, is entitled "Basic Annals" (*benji*). In composing these chapters, Sima Qian says he "generally investigated the Three Dynasties and made a record of the Qin and the Han, extending back to the Yellow Emperor and reaching down to the present" (*Shiji* 130.3319). By both chapter title and general content, "Basic Annals" centers largely on the imperial or kingly line and is often read as a record of legitimate succession extending from the mythical Yellow Emperor to Sima Qian's contemporary Emperor Wu (141–87 BCE). The second section consists of ten chapters of "Chronological Charts" (*biao*) and is followed by a third section made up of ten "Topical Essays" (*shu*), neither section considered further in the following discussion. The fourth section consists of

thirty chapters and is entitled "Hereditary Households" (*shijia*). Sima Qian explains that these chapters describe "ministers who are the arms and legs of the ruler." Consequently, most of the chapters in this section contain accounts of lords who presided over domains into which the Zhou polity was divided during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. The final section, "Arrayed Traditions" (*liezhuan*), sometimes translated "Biographies," contains seventy chapters dealing with historical figures who "established merit and reputation in the kingdom." In the usual way of understanding these sections, *Records of the Historian* provides a tripartite division of historical focus: a king- and emperor-centered history in the "Basic Annals"; a concern in the "Hereditary Households" with subordinate lords, who were for the most part rulers of their own smaller domains; and a record of other famous or meritorious figures in the "Arrayed Traditions."

Sima Qian was a government official who had scribal responsibilities, but he did not produce his vast *Records of the Historian* as a part of his official duty. Rather, his work was a private endeavor, which his father Sima Tan (180?–110 BCE) initiated, among other reasons, "to capture in a net all the scattered, lost, old accounts under heaven, to investigate therein past events, to trace and connect beginnings and endings, to examine the principles behind successes and failures, rise and decline."[4]

Han Historical Documents, like *Records of the Historian*, was also something of a family production, in which its main author Ban Gu (32–92) probably incorporated some texts his father Ban Biao (3–54) had written earlier. The Ban family's involvement in writing history seems to have begun privately, very much like that of the Simas, but their text was completed on imperial command. It is usually considered the first "dynastic history," thus establishing a pattern for official historiography to treat the individual dynasty as the natural temporal unit. Technically speaking, however, *Han Historical Records* concerns only the first half of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–23 CE). Still, it begins with the struggle for control of the empire that led to the fall of the Qin dynasty and the founding of the Han and continues down to the brief "usurpation" of Wang Mang, which creates in some ways a natural conclusion. Two characteristics of this fourth landmark text should be noted: first, it is slightly longer than *Records of the Historian* but covers a much briefer period of time, thus continuing the general "thickening" of the historical record; second, the text is replete with documents, many of them almost certainly from the court archives, and thereby resembles to some extent Arnoldo Momigliano's category of "antiquarian research" as much as history (1990: 54). Ban Gu and his father Ban Biao, as we shall see, were highly critical of Sima Qian and tried to put Chinese historiography on a more solid "orthodox" foundation, although they also abundantly copied both format and content from their illustrious predecessor. Historical writing with them became an occupational endeavor with methods and standards that encouraged successors not just to praise and draw from their predecessors but to criticize them as well.[5]

One final note might be added in regard to the last three of these four landmark histories. Michel de Certeau (1988: 2–6) has called history "a discourse of separation" and emphasizes the importance of a sense of "rupture" or break

between the historian's present and the past about which he writes. While one purpose of Chinese historical writing was to establish continuity with the past, three of the texts above can be regarded as records of rupture. *Zuo Commentary* is written during the harsh Warring States period and is very much obsessed with the decline of an order, largely imagined, of ritual (*li*) and cultural pattern (*wen*).[6] Sima Qian writes after the long struggle between political forces of unity and those of disunity had resulted in a short-lived and deeply troubled dynasty of unification, the Qin, which then fell, only to be followed by a long struggle of the subsequent Han emperors to suppress regional-based centers of power. This Han process of solidifying their leadership against resurgent forces of regionalism was completed only during the lifetimes of Sima Qian and his father. The next great historian Ban Gu wrote after the Liu-family rulers of the Han had been temporarily dethroned and Wang Mang had established another short-lived dynasty, the Xin (9–23), a rupture that needed somehow to be both recorded and, in a way, denied.

From Scribal Records to History

As noted above, written records from China predate the beginning of *Annals* by at least half a millennium. The existence of script and extensive government bureaucracies, as we know from examples elsewhere, are not sufficient to spur the development of historical writing. So why did this happen in China? The answer is not entirely clear, but we might point to two contributing factors. First, ancestor worship kept a strong cultic focus upon founding clan figures of the past and upon the necessity of leaving a record of oneself that would live on into the future. Bronze inscriptions from the early Zhou period demonstrate clearly this sense of oneself as a part of a family lineage extending through time. The inscription, which often commemorates one's accomplishments, is meant to be seen both by dead ancestors as they receive an offering in the sacred bronze vessel and by descendants who will similarly make offerings to honor their ancestors of whom the person commemorated in the inscription will then be a part. One of these inscriptions, dating from around 900 BCE, is so detailed in proclaiming the greatness of the ancestors of the past that it has been described as "probably the first conscious attempt in China to write history" (Shaughnessy 1992: 1).

   Second, divination played an important role in early Chinese culture and from early times there seems to have been a desire to inscribe a written record of instances of divination (Djamouri 1999). John B. Henderson, among other scholars, has noted the close relationship between divination and exegesis. Both concern such processes as "elucidating obscurities, giving foreknowledge, and adjudicating legal cases" (Henderson 1999: 79). It is likely that the brief entries of *Annals*, not in and of themselves properly labeled "history," were meant as much for the eyes of royal ancestors as for the eyes of contemporaries or future generations.[7] But once redacted, these entries soon after became the object of exegesis: what did each

entry signify and what did it portend? Such exegesis, practiced with particular vigor among the Confucians, naturally led to exegesis by means of explaining the larger context of the event noted so tersely in *Annals*.[8] These exegetical expansions, reflected for example in a text like *Zuo Commentary*, are full-fledged historical writings, however accurate or inaccurate they might be.

Whatever factors might have stimulated the rise of historical writing in China, we know that its development is closely connected to officials known as *shi*, a word most often translated as "scribe." These scribes, as we shall see, performed a variety of official tasks. One major task was to make records of important events taking place in the kingly and princely courts. An early and almost certainly idealized description of this office even claims that there were employed at court "scribes of the left" who recorded "actions" and "scribes of the right" who recorded "words."[9] As time passed, the term *shi*, "scribe," was generalized to become the closest equivalent in the early Chinese lexicon to our word "history." The relationship between the scribe and what came to be full-fledged history explains some of the most important features of Chinese historiography.

Certain contours of the scribe's duty in early China are revealed in a story that was almost surely fashioned by scribes themselves. Under the sixteenth year of the reign of Lord Wen of the Chinese state of Lu, a year corresponding to 644 BCE in the Western calendar, *Annals* contains the following entry: "In spring, in the royal first month, on the first day of the month, stones fell from the sky in the domain of Song, five in number. In the same month, six fishhawks flew backwards across the Song capital."[10] A scribe in the state of Lu presumably recorded this on the basis of information received from the neighboring state of Song. Why and for whom such records were made is not entirely clear, although they might have been as much for ancestors as for descendants, since there is some evidence that notices like this were read aloud in the ancestral temples.[11] Whatever the ultimate function of such records, the very act of producing them must have granted the noted event a certain *gravitas*.

The curious record of falling stones and fishhawks flying backwards does not end here. *Annals* becomes the focus of a rich commentarial tradition. Chief among the texts that comment and expand upon *Annals*, as noted above, is *Zuo Commentary*, which in the words of David Schaberg shows "traces of a historiographical practice that flourished before, during, and perhaps after the fourth century B.C.E., almost certainly among thinkers who considered themselves followers of the Confucians" (Schaberg 2001: 8). These Confucians saw themselves as "keepers of the past" and were very much a part of the scribal tradition. In commenting upon the *Annals* record under consideration, they note that the "stones were meteorites" and that the fishhawks flew backwards "because of the wind," just the type of rational explanations we would expect from this-worldly Confucians (Bodde 1961). They futher record that in the wake of these ostensibly curious events a "court scribe of Zhou named Shuxing, made an official visit to the state of Song, and Lord Xiang of Song asked him about these events: 'What do these portend? Where will the auspicious and the inauspicious events occur?'" Lord Xiang thus regards the stones and fishhawks as portents

and asks the scribe to decipher their hidden meaning. The account continues to tell us the scribe's response and what then ensued:

> "This year Lu will have many important funerals. Next year there will be rebellion in Qi. You, my lord, will win the support of the princes, but it will not persist to the end." He withdrew from the audience and told other people, "The ruler asked about the wrong things. These are matters of *yin* and *yang* and not matters in which one can locate the auspicious or the inauspicious. Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness arise from humans." (Lord Wen, Year 16)

The passage cited above reveals several things about the position and attitude of scribes during the period of time in which *Zuo Commentary* was compiled: first, the scribe is a state official; second, he supposedly possesses the capacity to understand portents, to explain curious occurrences, which points to an early connection in China between divination and historical writing (Vandermeersch 1992: 108); third, there is tension between the ruler's belief that the scribe has supernatural insight and the scribe's own view that the future, whether it be auspicious or inauspicious, results strictly from natural forces (*yin* and *yang*) and from human behavior; fourth, the scribe realizes that responding to the queries of a sovereign can be risky business and therefore tells the ruler what he thinks the ruler wants to hear: "I did not presume to contradict the ruler," he admits.

The scribe is caught in at least two contradictions. The first is that, as an official, he is supposed to speak honestly and frankly, and yet such honesty carries dangers. This fundamental problem in Chinese political history is captured elsewhere in *Zuo Commentary* where we are told most pointedly of the terrible price scribes can pay for reporting events honestly. In 548 BCE, a minister of the state of Qi named Cui Zhu assassinates his ruler Lord Zhuang. The text says:

> The grand scribe wrote, "Cui Zhu assassinated his ruler." Cui Zhu put him to death. The scribe's younger brothers succeeded him and wrote the same thing, and so two more persons were killed. Another younger brother again wrote it, whereupon Cui Zhu desisted. The scribe of the south, having heard that the grand scribes had all died, clutched the bamboo strips and went to court. He heard that the record had already been made and thus turned back. (Lord Xiang, Year 25)

The ideal of the good scribe is clear: he tells the truth without regard for the consequences. Moreover, if one scribe is eliminated, another scribe is always willing to step forward, no matter how great the danger, to assure that accurate records stand. But such an exaggerated insistence on heroic scribal behavior underlines the fact that records were deemed highly important and that those in power could and did exert pressure to assure that records conformed to their wishes.

The second contradiction highlighted in the story of the scribe Shuxing's visit to the state of Song is between the idea that certain events are supernatural portents that a scribe should interpret through some mysterious insight, and the more humanistic idea that all events in the human world, however odd, have naturalistic

or historical explanations. This apparent contradiction might indeed reflect a shift that had taken place in the mid-Warring States world toward more rational ways to regard human events, a shift congruent with the rise of Confucianism. After all, among those things Confucius supposedly "did not discuss" were "the strange" and "spirits" (*Analects* 7.21). Such a shift makes the past central to understanding the present and empowers those who preserve and can properly read that past. In *Analects*, Confucius twice describes himself as someone who "is fond of antiquity" (7.1, 7.20), and elsewhere says "One who understands the present by reviewing antiquity is worthy to be a teacher" (2.11). Confucius thus becomes the inspiration of those who would turn to the past and encourages future followers to use the past as a key to understanding and discussing their contemporary political world.[12]

Those responsible for keeping alive a memory of the past increased their importance in yet another way. The past not only offered explanations of the present but also became a repository of how things should be done. History was filled with exemplars, with "oughts." Acclaim for the models of the past fill the pages of *Zuo Commentary* and other texts from early China. For example:

> The kings of ancient times knew that one's span of life did not last long. So it was that they established everywhere sages and men of wisdom, set them apart as renowned and respected, distributed to them the colored insignia of distinction, and recorded their words and speeches. They made for the people rules and standards, explained to them norms and correct amounts, guided them to sign-posts and usages, gave to them laws and regulations, announced to them admonitions and canons, taught them to guard against undue profit, entrusted them with regular official duties, led them to the way of ritual and regulations, and ordered them not to neglect the benefits of the land. (Lord Wen, Year 6)

In fact, we can state a rule that is hardly ever violated in texts we might broadly call "Confucian" or, as some would prefer, "classicist": any description that follows the temporal adverbs "anciently" (*gu*) or "formerly" (*xi*) will be of something praiseworthy, while what follows the adverb "currently" (*jin*) will be of something undesirable. This conservative belief that history is filled with models and serves as a guide to correct a fallen present did not go unchallenged. When the minister Li Si convinced the First Qin Emperor in 213 BCE to order the state monopoly of some texts and the wholesale destruction of others, arguing that "nowadays scholars, instead of looking to the present, study antiquity in order to criticize their own age,"[13] he was continuing an attack upon the classicist idealization of the past that others had articulated earlier.[14]

The First Qin Emperor's attack upon the value of history did not prevail, and the Confucian backlash against the Qin bibliocaust assured the triumph of an educational structure organized around the classics, which of course meant a strong focus on the past.[15] Henceforth history might be a battleground of conflicting interpretations and even subject to outright fabrication, but it was rarely attacked as irrelevant. Indeed, history became a part of a traditionalist perspective that placed it alongside ritual, a kindred repository of ideal models for proper action. To reduce a text as

complex as *Zuo Commentary* to a single message may be oversimplistic, but if this must be done, then the message might be that those who violate the patterns and good order of the past, whether these are thought of as ritual or historical precedent, are bound to fail.[16]

Constructing an "Orderly" History

Before continuing this discussion, we should turn very briefly to the Chinese concept *li* 禮, which is regularly translated as "ritual" or "rites." Although this concept derives originally from the world of religious life, it comes to have a very general application, which ranges all the way from practices associated with ancestor worship to patterns of etiquette governing personal interaction. Anne Cheng (2002: 57) points to the slippage between ritual and a homophone, which means "proper order." Ritual, we might say, is the proper order governing all things, and as Confucius's disciple Youzi is supposed to have said, "In the application of ritual, harmony is most valued" (*Analects* 1.12). Harmony, which a cynical reader might well interpret as a harmony serving centers of political and social power, should pervade all human institutions and activities, and the principles of ritual or good order are meant to induce that harmony.

The above explanation is necessary because the intimate linkage of history and ritual in early China can be seen in, among other things, the way the office of the grand scribe was conceived in the *Ritual of Zhou*, a Confucian classic that lays out "a detailed description of what purports to be the governmental and administrative structure and organization of the royal state of Zhou" (Boltz 1993: 24). Among the scribe's tasks, this text claims, are maintaining the calendar, making sure sacrifices take place on propitious days, reading out and regulating the details of court ceremonies, assuring proper royal funeral ritual, granting an honorary posthumous name to the deceased ruler, and so forth (*Ritual of Zhou* [*Zhouli*], ch. 26). Such an association of ritual and record-keeping assured that the record-keeper, whether an early scribe or a later historian, would himself be shaped and judged by ritual expectations. The historical text was no exception to what Joachim Gentz has said of early Chinese texts in general: "In ancient China, the comprehensive ritual perspective on human action also covers the textual realm. Texts are used for ritual purposes and within ritual contexts. In their structure, however, texts are also articulations of ritual correctness" (Gentz 2005: 127). In examining the relationship between the textual form of history and notions of ritual correctness and proper order, we might begin with the first extended piece of historical criticism in early China, an essay from the writing brush of the Han official-scholar Ban Biao.[17]

Ban Biao descended from a prominent family that had risen to influence in part because Biao's aunt, Ban Jieyu, had been for a time the Han emperor Cheng's (r. 33–7 BCE) favorite concubine. The emperor consequently gifted the Ban family with copies of texts from the imperial archives, which then became the basis of a private library of some renown. Ban Biao, making use of his family's library, began

an ambitious project: a continuation of Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian*. This work, entitled "Later Traditions" or "Later Biographies" (*Hou zhuan*), is unfortunately no longer extant, although some of it might have been incorporated into his son Ban Gu's *Han Historical Documents*. Judging from the title, Ban Biao's "Later Traditions" must have comprised accounts of famous individuals who lived in the one hundred fifty years or so after the completion of Sima Qian's work.[18]

Ban Biao, then, was a historian working very much in the shadow of Sima Qian. His essay to which we now turn, a piece of writing that is extant, might be considered a Chinese example of Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence" (1997). Ban Biao, who, as noted above, had labored to write a continuation of Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian*, uses his essay to launch a harsh series of criticisms at his eminent predecessor, an endeavor that reflects an increasing self-consciousness and critical attitude about the task of writing history. These criticisms are of three types, dealing with style, ideology, and organization or format. Although it is the third of these criticisms that most concerns us here, the first two should be noted briefly. First, Ban Biao found Sima Qian's style inconsistent, repetitive, and tedious: one could "edit Sima Qian endlessly," he said. Second, and much more damning still in a world of increasing Confucian influence, is Ban Biao's attack on Sima Qian's ideology: "He esteems Huang-Lao Daoism and demeans the Five Classics." For example, Sima Qian's biographies of money-makers and knight-errants, two groups good Confucians disdained, were entirely too sympathetic, at least so Ban Biao thinks. The third criticism is somewhat more recondite than the other two:

> When Sima Qian put in order emperors and kings, then he called it "Basic Annals";
> for dukes and princes who passed down a state, he called it "Hereditary Households";
> and for ministers and gentlemen who had arisen with distinction, he called it "Arrayed
> Traditions." But Sima Qian went on to promote Xiang Yu and Chen She and to
> demote Huainan and Hengshan. His principles of organization are not standard but
> are vexatious and torturous" (*Hou Hanshu* 40A: 1327).

In order to understand precisely why Ban Biao is so disturbed, we must revert to the overall structure of Sima Qian's history. Its 130 chapters, as noted above, do not present the past as a single chronological narrative but are divided into five sections: "Basic Annals," "Chronological Charts," "Topical Essays," "Hereditary Households," and "Arrayed Traditions" or more simply "Biographies." Ban Biao objects to the way certain historical persons are distributed within this structure. Xiang Yu and Chen She, he says, are promoted, whereas Huainan and Hengshan are demoted. Sima Qian places Xiang Yu in the "Basic Annals" section and Chen She in the "Hereditary Household" section. This is wrong. Xiang Yu, despite the considerable power he exercised for a short time, never became an emperor, at least not one whose legitimacy was ever recognized. He should not be placed in a section of the text alongside emperors and kings of earlier times. Chen She was a commoner who led the first significant rebellion against the Qin dynasty. He is noteworthy, to be sure, and therefore deserves a place in the "Arrayed Traditions" section, but he

neither founded a powerful lineage nor served as an influential minister. How can he be properly classified in the "Hereditary Household" section? Neither Xiang Yu nor Chen She is worthy of the section in which they have been placed, Ban Biao contends. By contrast, both Huainan and Hengshan were descendants of the royal Han family and should therefore be treated in the "Hereditary Households." They are found, however, within the "Arrayed Traditions," demoted to a place alongside meritorious or noteworthy commoners.

The correct placement of figures within the organization of the historical text is not just Ban Biao's concern. As we might expect, his son Ban Gu not only repeats his father's criticism of Sima Qian but tries to structure his own historical text so as to correct Sima Qian's "errors," placing Xiang Yu, for example, in his "Arrayed Traditions" section rather than among the "Basic Annals." Worries about Sima Qian and the proper placement of persons within the historical text continue to resound throughout later writings. Approximately five hundred years after Ban Gu, for example, China's first great historiographer, the Tang scholar Liu Zhiji (661–721) grants Sima Qian's *Records of the Historian* considerable importance in his survey of Chinese historical writing.[19] Still, he has much to say about Sima Qian that is critical. Chief among these criticisms is the same one Ban Biao voiced earlier: in *Records of the Historian* persons are too often placed in a section where they do not properly belong. His account of Sima Qian's presumed mistakes is somewhat more colorful that of Ban Biao:

> Sima Qian's … divisions are not thorough. Someone like King Xiang ought to be given a "Traditions" chapter, but his name is taken as the head of a "Basic Annals" chapter. It is not only that Xiang Yu was a usurper and a bandit and cannot be the equal of a Son of Heaven, but also, if we look into the narrative of his affairs, it is all a record of words that have been passed down. If we try to call this an "Annals," it is not appropriate. (ch. 6)[20]

In addition to the mistake of inserting a "usurper" into the midst of kings and emperors, Sima Qian has relied for his record, Liu opines, on oral traditions, "words that have been passed down," rather than upon official records. Here the Tang historiographer is making an interesting distinction between material that belongs in "Annals" and in "Traditions" that we will not pursue further here. One thing is clear, Xiang Yu has been misplaced. And Chen She as well:

> Chen Sheng (= Chen She) arose from a group of bandits. He was called "king" for six months and then died. His sons and grandsons did not succeed him, and they possessed no land at all. There is nothing "hereditary" to be passed down, and no "household" in which to dwell. How could it be appropriate to give him the label "Hereditary Household"? (ch. 5)

At best, this "bandit" and "short-term king," who left behind neither land nor a successor, should be put in the "Traditions" section and not among the "Hereditary Households."

So far Liu Zhiji is simply reiterating Ban Biao's criticisms. But his concerns go further. He is troubled, for example, that Sima Qian not only assigns a "Basic Annals" chapter to the Qin dynasty, covering the period when they had unified the realm and ruled as sole power, but also dedicates a second chapter to the rulers of the Qin state before those rulers unified China in 221 BCE. "The Ying [Qin dynasty] from Boyi to Lords Zhuang and Xiang," Liu Zhiji says of the Qin rulers prior to the declaration of the Qin empire, "were ranked among the nobles but their names are found under the Basic Annals" (ch. 4). These predynastic rulers, Liu thinks, should not be listed on the same level with those who reigned over the entire realm, but should be placed in "Hereditary Households" alongside other regional lords.

There is no need to continue here with additional obscure explanations of the historical details behind criticisms of the organization of Sima Qian's history. It is important to note, however, that Chinese scholars of history were very much concerned with the structure of a text and the way historical persons and events were distributed within that structure. It is surprising how often Liu Zhiji, following Ban Biao and Ban Gu, returns to this issue in one context or another. Such an issue as the validity of sources, for example, clearly is of less concern to these critics of historical writing than the way people from the past get classified.[21] How do we explain this?

As Joachim Gentz says "texts are also articulations of ritual correctness." One of the purposes of ritual, he goes on to argue, is "to differentiate social and political rank" (Gentz 2005: 125). A history of the past must sustain the proper ritual order in big things and in small; this may indeed be its primary purpose. Behind the attacks on the organization of Sima Qian's history of the past is the suspicion that it violates ritual order by failing to differentiate properly among the social and political ranks of key persons from the past. Such a lapse has the potential to destabilize the established order.

One of Sima Qian's major contributions is to present a lineage of rulers extending from the mythical Yellow Emperor on down to the Han Emperor Wu, a period of well over two millenia. This has been read as an attempt to fashion an orthodox line of succession, which naturally leads to the question of why he has inserted Xiang Yu and also the preimperial Qin lords into that lineage. The real reason for this, I believe, is that the great Chinese historian wanted his "Basic Annals" to contain twelve chapters and this forced awkward adjustments and compromises. The *Annals*, which he took as a model for this portion of his text and which he believed had been edited into shape by the Master Confucius himself, was organized around twelve lords of the state of Lu. Twelve is moreover the number of months in the yearly cycle, and both Sima Qian and his father Sima Tan were by profession as much calendricists as historians. In fact, Sima Qian played a prominent role in the great Han calendar reform of 105 BCE. The strong link between the calendar and ritual is reflected in such texts in early China as "Monthly Ordinances" (*Yueling*) which mechanically moves through the twelve months and notes the proper rituals associated with each. In other words, Sima Qian is affirming a cosmic

ritual order with the number twelve, but in so doing he has filled out that number in a way that violates another ritual order, that concerning the proper categorization of historical persons.[22]

The relationship between ritual and history in the Chinese tradition, I have argued, is an intimate one. Sima Qian, the so-called father of Chinese history, held a position at court entitled *taishiling* which has been variously translated as "prefect grand scribe" or "prefect grand astrologer." His official task was to prepare the annual calendar, identify auspicious and inauspicious days for various rituals, and keep a record of omens as they appeared both in heaven and on earth (Bielenstein 1980: 19). The *taishiling* was part of the Ministry of the Grand Master of Ceremonies who had charge of all state rituals. The highly idealized vision of officialdom that is found in the Confucian classic *Ritual of Zhou* (*Zhouli*), which was already known in Sima Qian's day, also assigns to the grand scribe a variety of ritual tasks. These include "joining with all the functionaries on days of abstinence and fasting to read out loud the ritual texts and assist in sacrifices" and "taking up the documents on days of sacrifice to put in order positions and regularities" (*Zhouli* 26.14b). Although the completion of *Records of the Historian* was indeed a private endeavor, it would be incorrect to assume that the authors aspired in their task as scribes and ultimately historians to be completely free from the professional air they breathed daily. That was air saturated with lofty expectations of good order.

The Subtleties of Revealing and Concealing

The essentially ritualistic nature of early Chinese history derives not so much from the duties of the grand scribe as from the fact that the tradition in which the Simas, Bans, and later historians wrote was one which saw ritual significance not only in the larger structure of the historical text but also in its very wording. What was the origin of this tradition? It derives, Sima Qian believes, from the much earlier editorial work of the Master Confucius himself.

The first biography of Confucius appears in *Records of the Historian*.[23] According to that account, after Confucius fails in state after state to obtain service as a political advisor, the Master returns to his native state of Lu and dedicates his remaining energy to textual scholarship, editing *The Book of Odes* (*Shijing*) and *The Book of Documents* (*Shujing*), putting ritual in proper order, and writing appendices to *The Book of Changes* (*Yijing*). This textual scholarship culminates in reworking the Lu state records into *Annals*. In this slender volume, to quote Sima Qian, "the way of the kings was perfected, and the affairs of man made complete" (*Shiji* 14:509). Elsewhere he describes *Annals* as "the grand essence of ritual and duty" (130:3297–98). Sima Qian further argues that the correct Confucian interpretation of *Annals* was transmitted to his disciples orally and was eventually incorporated into *Zuo Commentary*.

A good way to begin an investigation of this particular tradition is to examine a passage from *Annals* with its *Zuo Commentary* reading. The passage concerns a scribe's judgment of a minister from the state of Jin named Zhao Dun. In the second

year of the Lord Xuan of the state of Lu (607 BCE), we read the following terse *Annals* entry: "In autumn, in the ninth month, on the *yichou* day (26), Zhao Dun of Jin assassinated his ruler Yigao." What hidden meaning or judgment can one mine from this simple text? *Zuo Commentary* provides the background. The ruler Yigao is known to history under his posthumous name Ling, which means something like "ghostly" or "spiritual," a name typically granted to rulers of dubious merit (Wang 1962: 3.967). *Zuo Commentary* informs us that "Lord Ling was no ruler" and proceeds to tell us of his curious outrages: shooting pellets from a tower at his people for amusement, killing his cooks for preparing poorly the great culinary delicacy of bear paws, and decorating the walls of his palace with ostentatious carved patterns. His minister Zhao Dun remonstrates courageously, trying to persuade Lord Ling to change his bizarre and unseemly behavior, but the Lord is recalcitrant and even sends a man named Chu Ni to kill his troublesome minister. But Zhao Dun's extreme professional devotion softens the heart of his would-be killer:

> When Chu Ni went in the morning, the doors of the bedchamber were open. Zhao Dun was fully dressed in official robes and was about to go to court. It was still early, and he was sitting with closed eyes. Chu Ni withdrew and sighed, saying, "He who does not forget reverence is the master of the people. To murder the master of the people is not loyal; to discard the ruler's command is faithless. To be guilty of either of these is worse than death." He smashed his head against a locust tree and died.

The ruler tries again to kill Zhao Dun, and the latter flees the state. Finally, Zhao Dun's cousin, Zhao Chuan takes action. *Zuo Commentary* reads as follows:

> On the *yichou* day (26), Zhao Chuan assassinated Lord Ling at Taoyuan. Zhao Dun returned before leaving the mountains of Jin. The scribe wrote, "Zhao Dun assassinated his ruler" and showed the record at court. Zhao Dun said, "This was not so." He replied, "You are the chief minister. Yet fleeing you did not cross the state border; upon returning you did not punish the culprit. If you are not responsible, who would be?" Zhao Dun said, "Alas! As it says in the *Odes*, 'My longing is such, / That I bring sorrow upon myself.' That describes me indeed!" Confucius said, "Dong Hu was a worthy scribe of ancient times: he did not conceal anything in his rules of writing. Zhao Dun was a worthy high officer of ancient times: he bore a guilty verdict for the sake of these rules. What a pity! Had he crossed the state border, he would have been absolved."

Zhao Dun initially protested against the scribe's judgment: he did not in fact assassinate his ruler nor did he participate in the conspiracy. How can this scribe have written, and Confucius preserved in *Annals*, the entry "Zhao Dun assassinated his ruler?" But in protesting these words, Zhao has failed to understand the scribe's task. The good scribe Dong Hu has complied with what Confucius describes as "the rules of writing." Zhao Dun was the chief minister. He was within the boundaries of the state when the assassination took place, and he did not punish the actual assassin. The rules are harsh. As Confucius himself says, "had he (Zhao Dun) crossed the state border, he would have been absolved!" The canonical *Annals* will

forever condemn the Jin chief minister Zhao Dun, a condemnation Zhao Dun himself accepts once he fully understands the scribal principles: "I bring sorrow upon myself!" Responsibility for the assassination is assigned according to ritual rules, seemingly arbitrary, rather than according to the actual events. The scribe's responsibility, then, is not so much to the actual facts, at least as we might understand them, as to ritual conventions of praise and blame.

We are, to be sure, considering here a way of reading *Annals* that was most likely a pious Confucian invention (Kennedy 1964). It may well be that in this particular case *Annals* records the event accurately – Zhao Dun did assassinate his ruler – and that the writers in the *Zuo Commentary* tradition, aware of Zhao Dun's general virtue, are simultaneously assigning him responsibility for the murder and covering his direct involvement in the crime itself. But the notion that writing the past should praise and blame, reveal and conceal according to the subtle patterns of ritual appropriateness and through careful word choice has serious influence upon historiography in early China.

We turn here to two typical examples from *Zuo Commentary*'s reading of *Annals* that display this attention to verbal detail. In the first case, importance is attached to the very name by which someone is designated. In the seventh year of Lord Yin, 716 BCE, *Annals* has the following simple notice: "The Prince of Teng died." Now, in many other such cases in *Annals*, albeit not all, the personal name of a ruler is given at the time his death is announced, but here we have only a title. *Zuo Commentary* explains this rarity as follows:

> It does not record his birth name because Teng had not yet joined in a covenant with Lu. In all cases when one of the princes has joined in a covenant with us then he is referred to by name. Therefore, when one expired, the notice of death used birth names, announced the death, and proclaimed the successor in order to continue good relations and to calm the people. We consider this a regular principle of ritual propriety.

The regular principle of ritual propriety dictates, according to this commentary, that names of those with an alliance to Lu, the state of those who originally wrote the cryptic entries of *Annals*, be recorded differently from those outside such an alliance.

In a second example, names are not provided in *Annals* for yet another subtle reason. An entry under the second year of Lord Wen (625 BCE) says simply, "In winter, leaders from Jin, Song, Chen and Zheng attacked Qin." The *Zuo Commentary* explanation reads as follows:

> In winter, Xian Qieju of Jin, Gongzi Cheng of Song, Yuan Xuan of Chen, and Gongzi Guisheng of Zheng attacked Qin. They occupied Wang, advancing as far as Pengya, and then returned home. This was in retaliation for the campaign of Pengya. That the ministers' names are not recorded was because of Lord Mu and was in honor of Qin. We refer to this as esteeming the virtuous.

This explanation is a bit obscure and rather arbitrary, as seem so many explanations in the praise and blame tradition. Lord Mu of Qin was a good ruler who, for example, employed the virtuous minister Meng Ming. The *Zuo* authors here claim that the names of his attackers are omitted as a way of paying honor to this Qin ruler. They are condemned to obscurity while Lord Mu's name lives on. At least they *were* condemned to obscurity, for in explaining what the esteemed *Annals* is really implying, the *Zuo* authors rewrite the *Annals* line so as to supply the personal names of the attackers!

Repeatedly the *Zuo Commentary* insists that language in *Annals* is being used with great care and significance. Readers familiar with early Chinese thought have no doubt detected in all of this the Confucian concept of "rectification of names" (*zhengming*), which Benjamin Schwartz explains as follows (1985: 92): "If language is not used in ways which conform to its correct imbedded meanings, the entire human order will become disjointed." Keeping language consistent and accurate thus is an essential part of the proper order that sustains a harmonious realm.

As we have noted, there are ironies in this tradition. Part of the claim made for *Annals* is that its careful, subtle word choice also gives special meaning to silence. Concealing can also be a form of judgment. And just as in the case above, where *Zuo Commentary* must reveal the names of Qin's attackers to indicate what *Annals* has so meaningfully concealed, indiscreet revelation is regularly deployed in *Zuo Commentary* to demonstrate the discreet concealment that typifies *Annals*. The following *Zuo* entry from the second year of Lord Wen (625 BCE), which quotes and explains the genius of *Annals*, is a clear example of this practice:

> On account of the lord's failure to attend their court, Jin forces came to chastise us. So the lord went to Jin. In summer, in the fourth month, on the *jisi* day (13), the Jin leaders sent Yang Chufu to swear a covenant with the lord in order to shame him. The text (i.e., *Annals*) says, "We swore a covenant with Chufu of Jin": this is to express abhorrence of the event. That the lord's trip to Jin was not recorded was to conceal it.

The rather abrupt notice of the covenant and the fact that it was sworn with a minister rather than the Jin lord himself does point to an inequality. Moreover, the Lord of Lu had left the state and gone to Jin under pressure – at least this is what the *Zuo* commentators assert. Their source of this knowledge is unknown. Often in *Annals* when the ruler of Lu leaves the state it is noted, but there is no such note in this case. The fact that the Lu scribes did not record this detail, a detail the *Zuo* commentators claim to know, is "to express abhorrence of the event." In other words, their concealment of this matter is a judgment. Such concealment, we must presume, is a part of their "rules of writing" and is one way in which they convey "great principles through subtle wording." But in explaining their forerunners' discretion, the commentators reveal what Confucius deemed best to keep hidden.

In this small example, a fundamental tension in Chinese historiography becomes manifest: the most admired scribal records of the past, edited into their present form by a sage-historian, Confucius himself, are verbally disciplined and cautious,

but they must be explained to be understood fully and that act of explanation, which often provides historical detail, violates the ritualistic discretion of the earlier master work. Sima Qian himself acknowledges this tension in a remarkable explanation of the origin of the two texts under discussion here, *Annals* and *Zuo Commentary*. First he explains that Confucius "put in order *Annals*, going back to Lord Yin and coming down to Lord Ai's capture of the unicorn, making its wording economical and getting rid of the superfluous and repetitious." He then goes on to say,

> The seventy disciples received the meanings of the tradition orally. Since there were words and explanations that satirized and ridiculed, praised and obscured, and impugned, they could not be set forth in writing. The Lu gentleman Zuo Qiuming feared that the various disciples, differing in their biases, would be content with their own opinions and lose what was genuine. Therefore, taking Confucius's scribal records as his basis, he put in order all their words and completed the *Annals of Master Zuo*. (*Shiji* 14:509–10)

Most Chinese scholars, at least in the West, do not believe Zuo Qiuming, a shadowy figure mentioned once in the Confucian *Analects*, to be the compiler of *Zuo Commentary*. He would have been a mid-fifth century figure, and we know the text, at least as we have it today, is much later. But the general process described here is not entirely implausible. According to this passage, Confucius did not want certain things "set forth in writing." Words of satire, ridicule, and praise are best only hinted at in the text and left to word of mouth for full expression. To put it more directly, the nasty details behind the events recorded so economically in *Annals* were to be passed along from master to disciple as part of an oral tradition. But one of these disciples, Zuo Qiuming, was afraid these explanatory details, so necessary to a full appreciation of the *Annals*' great principles, would be lost or fall victim to the distortions of scholarly wrangling. Consequently, he consigned them to writing. His act, which resulted in a fuller record of the past, was a violation of Confucian discretion made necessary by the very instability of oral transmission. It is almost as if history, at least insofar as it departs from the barest record of major events, is a necessary evil.

The tradition I have outlined here, bequeaths to the historian a set of complex and sometimes opposing expectations. One of these is that to dispense praise and blame is an important task of the historian and is best done with subtlety. It thus becomes ironic that good Confucian critics, such as Ban Biao, Ban Gu, and Liu Zhiji, never stop to consider, or at least never openly discuss the possibility, that Sima Qian's categorization of such figures as Xiang Yu, Chen She, and Huainan is his own act of praise and blame. Praise for the former two men, who brought down the Qin dynasty and made his own Han dynasty possible, and condemnation for the latter, who after all was a rebel not against the Qin like the former two but against the Han. But arching over all these expectations and tensions is the notion that those who write history should attend to proper structure at the macrolevel and proper wording at the microlevel of textual production. Even though the

length of historical texts grows substantially from *Annals* to such later works as *Records of the Historian* or Ban Gu's *Han Historical Records*, critics such as Liu Zhiji still look to conciseness as the ideal, and criticize later histories for their verbosity. Meanwhile, the reader is left to scrutinize details, wondering what praise and blame, what political message, might be hidden in the structure, wording, and very silences of the historical text.

Final Considerations

The previous discussion has considered several of the major texts and dominant principles of early Chinese historical writing. What has not yet been taken up, however, is the key question that haunts all of us who turn to these records as a way of understanding early China: just how accurate are they as historical sources? Ultimately that question can only be answered on a case-by-case basis. Taeko Brooks (2010) is probably correct, for example, in calling *Annals* the "proper primary source for the period" and in expressing serious reservations about the injudicious way *Zuo Commentary* has so often been employed as a guide to Spring and Autumn history. One can also say, as has so often been averred, that *Han Historical Documents* is more reliable than *Records of the Historian* precisely because it does not reach back so far in time and also because it so often simply reproduces documents from the court archives. But I would like to venture here a more general response to the question of reliability.

François Hartog has argued that Greek historiography was pushed to the periphery by philosophy that "was going to become, from the fourth century BCE, the major reference and, so to speak, the measuring rod of the Greek intellectual" (2005: 54–55). While this was only one factor in the gradual decline of Greek historical writing, there was no tendency in China for the dominant philosophy, Confucianism, to relegate history to the margins. Confucius, as I have noted earlier, "loved antiquity," and at least through the Han dynasty he was admired as much for his supposed work on the historical source *Annals* as for the exchanges with students preserved in the more philosophical *Analects*. Contrary to the situation in ancient Greece, one could argue that the complication in China was that history became *too important*. We have seen above several ways in which this place of importance might have compromised Chinese historical writing. First, government officials were often the scribes or historians, and the consequences for them of rulers' disapproval, as the story of Cui Zhu indicates, could be serious indeed.[24] Second, history was very much the handmaid of ritual and thereby often judged by standards outside of itself. Third, concealment was a principle of historical writing (nonwriting?), which orthodox interpretations of the classic *Annals* validated, a principle which continued to plague Chinese historical writing beyond the period under survey here.[25] Finally, history was a source of exemplars and precedents. As Schaberg has put it, "History was reduced to evidence" (1999: 16). All of this is to say that early Chinese historical writing was an important part of a dominant ideology of power and control, a fact which must constantly be kept in mind as one turns to these sources for a picture of the Chinese

past. The written sources for serious research, to be sure, are abundant but, as is the case with such sources elsewhere, they must be used with careful regard for both their possibilities and their limitations.

Finally, the students of Chinese historical texts, particularly that huge corpus known as *The Twenty-Five Dynastic Histories*, have sometimes complained of their rather rigid structure, their stereotyped portrayal of historical characters, and their overly formulaic language, for the historical text, circumscribed by strong principles of ritual, can be flattened into repetitive patterns and boring sameness.[26] If this were always the case, then the study of Chinese historical texts would be dreary indeed. Luckily, the human spirit is stubborn, the compulsion to write freely of the past strong. The rules of writing, which are really rules of ritual propriety, are sometimes violated, just as the rigid poetic rules of Tang dynasty regulated verse are also on occasion violated, but it is the existence of such rules, explicit or only implied, that makes the moment of violation, the exception, shine through as something deserving the greatest attention and admiration. This is certainly true for the early period, where at least three of the landmark texts surveyed above, the bare bones *Annals* the possible exception, possess moments of both literary and historiographic genius.

Notes

1   As the dates above indicate, there is no clear division between these two periods. For complex reasons we will not go into here, both the ending date of the Spring and Autumn period and the beginning date of the Warring States period are given variously. The entire period extending from 722 to 221 is sometimes referred to as the Eastern Zhou, although technically speaking the Zhou ruling line came to an end in 256 BCE.

2   For detail on the Shang/Zhou period of Chinese history, see Loewe and Shaughnessy 1999. An excellent one-volume survey of the Qin/Han period can be found in Lewis 2007.

3   "Si, par rapport aux historiographies orientales, les Grecs sont des tard venus, c'est avec eux, justement avec Hérodote, que surgit l'historien comme figure 'subjective'" (Hartog 2005: 39). Hartog in this insight follows, as he acknowledges, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who noted in his Oxford lectures in 1908 that "… the ancient Semites are lacking in exactly that quality through which the Greeks made the writing of history into a conscious art. They have historical writing, but they have no historian" (1908: 6). The *Spring and Autumn Annals* and *Zuo Commentary* do not contain on their pages a historian as a self-named consciousness. In the Chinese tradition, this begins with Sima Qian.

4   *Shiji* 130.3319. My translation here is based on Li 1999: 43.

5   Thucydides was also critical of Herodotus, although he does not mention the latter by name and is not that harsh (Thucydides 1:20). Perhaps a closer parallel to the Bans criticism of Sima Qian is Polybius's attack upon his predecessor Timaeus (Polybius 12.3).

6   One of the main arguments of David Schaberg's masterful study (Schaberg 2001).

7   I am insisting here on a distinction between records that might be used for historical purposes and historical writing. Annals or chronicles that simply list events one after the other do not constitute history. Establishing lines of causality, or "telling the real story" behind events is the stuff of historical writing (Châtelet 1962: 13; White 1987: 4). That

these early annalistic records in China were intended for the eyes of ancestors is argued quite persuasively, I think, by Lothar von Falkenhausen (1993: 162–163).

8   Sima Qian's theory of the origin of the *Zuo Commentary* (*Shiji* 14:509–510), which I discuss briefly below and about which I have written more extensively elsewhere (Durrant 1992: 295–301), stresses this connection between exegesis among Confucius and his followers and the preservation of the historical context of *Annals*.

9   *Li ji* (Records of Ritual), ch.13. This, I believe, was a retrospective construction meant to explain the existence of two streams of historical documents, one recording events (*Annals*) and one recording speeches (*Ancient Historical Documents*), which then came together in the mixed style of *Zuo Commentary*. On the role of scribes in early China, see Lewis 1999: 17, 102, and passim, and Blakeley 2004: 244–254. The standard work on this subject remains Shirakawa 1974: 1–68, 307–364.

10 All passages from *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the *Zuo Commentary* are slightly adapted from a forthcoming translation of these texts: Durrant et al. in preparation. The year of the particular lord from which such citations are drawn will be cited in the text and gives easy access to Chinese texts and to Western-language translations.

11 For an excellent summary of the arguments on this issue, see van Auken 2006: 38–46.

12 For this, too, there are interesting parallels in Greco-Roman historiography: see Raaflaub 2010.

13 *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji*), ch. 6. Translation from Watson 1993: 54.

14 *The Book of Lord Shang* (*Shangjun shu*) is one of the earliest texts to make repeated attacks on the use of tradition and history. I quote just one of many examples of this kind from this text: "A country which is administered by the aid of odes, history, rites, music, filial piety, brotherly duty, virtue and moral culture, will, as soon as the enemy approaches, be dismembered; if he does not approach, the country will be poor." Trans. Duyvendak 1928: 200.

15 Ban Gu notes in his *Han Historical Records* that during the rebellion against the Qin, Confucian scholars flocked to the support of the rebel leader. Then, under the new Han dynasty, they eventually were drawn into the bureaucracy and the study of the classics put under their direction (see *Hanshu* 88:3591–3592). On the Qin bibliocaust, see Bodde 1986: 52–71.

16 On this and many other issues broached here concerning *Zuo Commentary*, see Schaberg 2001.

17 This essay is found in Fan Ye's *History of the Latter Han* (*Hou Hanshu*), ch. 40.

18 Ban Biao's "Later Biographies" was one of several such continuations, two of them from the hands of slightly older and more famous contemporaries, the great bibliographer and textual editor, Liu Xin (46 BCE–23 CE) and the curmudgeonly Confucian philosopher Yang Xiong (53 BCE–18 CE). On the rise of the Ban family and their involvement into collecting texts and eventually writing history, see Clark 2008.

19 His text, *A Comprehensive Study of Historical Writing* (*Shitong*) has been vastly understudied in Western sinology. There is, as yet, no complete translation. For a provocative study of Liu Zhiji, see Hung 1969.

20 Translations from *Shitong* given here are adapted from an ongoing work on *Shitong* by William Crowell, Jeffrey Howard, and Stephen Durrant.

21 On the general issue of "truth" in early Chinese historiography, see Durrant 2005.

22 I should note in passing that Ban Gu preserves the number twelve for his "Basic Annals" in *Han Historical Annals*, correcting Sima Qian's "mistakes," but with one awkward, oft-criticized concession of his own – granting the Empress Lü a chapter even though she

was technically ruling in her son's place. Even the ritually more correct Ban Gu needs to make concessions to fill out the proper number. Such is the force of precedent.

23   *Shiji*, ch.47. For a translation, see Yang and Yang 1974: 1–27.

24   It should not be forgotten in this connection, that China's first two great historians, Sima Qian and Ban Gu both ran afoul of their rulers, the first suffering the punishment of castration and the second dying in prison. In each case, their punishment was ostensibly for crimes other than historical research, but in each case there have been persistent suggestions that their legal difficulties might not have been entirely unrelated to their work as historians.

25   On this issue, see the excellent survey of the entire tradition of Chinese historical writing by Yang 1961: 51.

26   Note, for example, the following judgment of biographies found in the dynastic histories: In "all of these works, biographies generally were highly formal, and often nothing more than a series of near clichés and without much personal information" (Zurndorfer 1995: 137).

References

Bielenstein, H. 1980. *The Bureaucracy of Han Times*. Cambridge.

Blakeley, B. 2004. "'On the Authenticity and Nature of the *Zuo zhuan*' Revisited." *Early China* 29: 217–67.

Bloom, H. 1997. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. Oxford.

Bodde, D. 1961. "Myths of Ancient China." In S.N. Kramer (ed.), *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 367–408. New York.

Bodde, D. 1986. "The state and empire of Ch'in." In J.K. Fairbank and D. Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, I: *The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C. – A.D. 220*, 20–102. Cambridge.

Boltz, W.G. 1993. "Chou li." In M. Loewe and W.G. Boltz (eds.), *Early Chinese Texts*, 24–32. Berkeley.

Brooks, T. 2010. "The Historical Value of the Chun/Chyou." *Warring States Papers: Studies in Chinese and Comparative Philology* 1: 73–76. Amherst, MA.

Certeau, M. de. 1988. *The Writing of History*. Trans. Tom Conley. New York.

Châtelet, F. 1962. *La Naissance de l'histoire*, I. Paris.

Chemla, K., D. Harper, and M. Kalinowski (eds.). 1999. *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident. Cahiers de recherches comparatives*, 21. St. Denis.

Cheng, A. 2002. *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*. Paris.

Clark, A. 2008. *Ban Gu's History of Early China*. Amherst, NY.

Djamouri, R. 1999. "Divination et Rationalité en Chine ancienne." *In Chemla et al*. 1999: 11–35.

Durrant, S. 1992. "Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Conception of *Tso chuan*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112.2: 295–301.

Durrant, S. 2005. "Truth Claims in Shi ji." In H. Schmidt-Glintzer, A. Mittag, and J. Rüsen (eds.), *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, Historical Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, 93–114. Leiden.

Durrant, S., W.-y. Li, and D. Schaberg. In preparation. *Zuo Traditions*. Seattle.

Duyvendak, J. J.-L. 1928. *The Book of Lord Shang*. London.

Falkenhausen, L. von. 1993. "Issues in Western Zhou Studies." *Early China* 18:139–226.

Falkenhausen, L. von. 2006. *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence*. Los Angeles.

Gentz, J. 2005. "The Ritual Meaning of Textual Form." In Kern 2005: 124–148.

Hartog, F. 2005. *Évidence de l'histoire*. Paris.

Henderson, J. B. 1999. "Divination and Confucian Exegesis." In Chemla et al. 1999: 79–89.

Hung, W. 1969. "A Tang Historiographer's Letter of Resignation." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 29: 5–52.

Kennedy, G.A. 1964. "Interpretation of the Ch'un-ch'iu." In T.-y. Li (ed.), *Selected Works of George A. Kennedy*, 79–103. New Haven.

Kern, M. (ed.). 2005. *Text and Ritual in Early China*. Seattle.

Kraus, C.S. (ed.). 1999. *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*. Leiden.

Lewis, M.E. 1999. *Writing and Authority in Early China*. Albany.

Lewis, M.E. 2007. *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han*. Cambridge, MA.

Li, W.-y. 1999. "Knowledge and Skepticism in Ancient Chinese Historiography." In Kraus 1999: 27–54.

Loewe, M., and E.L. Shaughnessy. 1999. *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, I: *From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*. Cambridge.

Momigliano, A. 1990. *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*. Berkeley.

Nylan, M. 2001. *The Five "Confucian" Classics*. New Haven.

Raaflaub, K.A. 2010. "Ulterior Motives in Ancient Historiography: What Exactly, and Why?" In L. Foxhall, H.-J. Gehrke, and N. Luraghi (eds.), *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*, 189–210. Stuttgart.

Schaberg, D. 1999. "Social Pleasures in Early Chinese Historiography." In Kraus 1999: 1–26.

Schaberg, D. 2001. *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography*. Cambridge, MA.

Schwartz, B. 1985. *The World of Thought in Ancient China*. Cambridge, MA.

Shaughnessy, E.L. 1992. *Sources of Western Zhou History: Inscribed Bronze Vessels*. Berkeley.

Shirakawa, S. 1974. *Kōkotsu kinbungaku ronshū*. Kyoto.

van Auken, N. 2006. *A Formal Analysis of the Chuenchiou* 春秋 *(Spring and Autumn Classic)*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington.

Vandermeersch, L. 1992. "L'imaginaire divinatoire dans l'histoire en Chine." *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 79.1: 1–8.

Wang, L. 1962. *Gudai hanyu (Ancient Chinese)*. Beijing.

Watson, B. (trans.). 1993. *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*. Hong Kong and New York.

White, H. 1987. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von. 1908. *Greek Historical Writing and Apollo: Two Lectures Delivered before the University of Oxford, June 3 and 4, 1908*. Oxford.

Yang, H.-y., and G. Yang (trans.). 1974. *Records of the Historian*. Hong Kong.

Yang, L.-s. 1961. "The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography." In W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank (eds.), *Historians of China and Japan*, 44–59. London.

Zurndorfer, H.T. 1995. *China Bibliography: A Research Guide to Reference Works about China Past and Present*. Leiden.

3

History and Primordium in Ancient Indian Historical Writing: *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* in the *Mahābhārata* and Beyond

Jᴀᴍᴇs L. Fɪᴛzɢᴇʀᴀʟᴅ

Introduction

India is almost as infamous for having no sense of "history" as it is for the gold-digging ants Herodotus made famous. Some now think that Herodotus's report was simply a misapprehension of an underlying truth – the "ants" turn out to be marmots in certain Himalayan mountain locales whose excavation mounds just happened to contain usable bits of gold (Peissel 1984: 73ff.). But the old saw about India's lack of history has not been as easily cured. (At times it moved beyond the realm of the intellectual disciplines to the ridiculous extreme of claiming that the culture and society of India were in fact static across millennia, that "early India wrote no history because it never made any" [Macdonell 1900: 11].)[1] That misapprehension was due to misalignments of the cultural categories and sensibilities of two complex civilizations interacting across a poisonous colonial divide. But there is no cross-cultural gold standard defining intellectual disciplines or themes such as "history" and "the writing of history," though the wielders of imperial power do typically presume that their cultural categories define universal norms in some "objective" or "natural" way. Yet as we now know well, and as this volume itself attests, the notions of what constitutes knowledge of "history" and what counts as a discipline of history-writing are constructs that have varied a lot, and they have done so greatly even within that European civilizational continuum that produced the colonial rulers of India. The civilization of India *did* produce historical knowledge and historical accounts, but it did so in its own variety of forms – forms that were embedded in the varying agendas of the different elites that generated them.[2]

Many scholars of Indian history in the past several decades have challenged various aspects of incomplete awareness and erroneous or exaggerated elements in the claim of India's lacking "history," with the distinguished historian of India, Romila Thapar, leading the way in numerous writings.[3] Thapar has had distinguished company in these reflections, many of whom are discussed in Arvind Sharma's *Hinduism and Its Sense of History* (2003). Sharma catalogs the history of this notion of Indian civilization, analyzes it methodically, and synthesizes some of the work of recent historians of India to demonstrate the overall inadequacy of the "no-history" thesis. But in spite of the real value of Thapar's and Sharma's and their colleagues' well-grounded corrections of faulty understandings of ancient Indian historiography, they have left out of account that part of that record that is most baffling to the modern Western sense of history. While implicitly and explicitly acknowledging that there are some grounds for the old colonial view,[4] they have not explained the particular and genuine sense of history that does underlie the predominant genre of historical composition in Hindu India in the Common Era, namely: *purāṇa*, "a primordial account of primordial things." The long predominance of *purāṇa* in Hindu culture – both in the fact of the vast proliferation of the texts of this genre and in the fact of the wide and deep influence of its basic ideas and sensibilities[5] – is the single most important reason that Western scholarship has often concluded that traditional Hindu scholars had no sense of history.

This chapter will make clear that although *purāṇa* is fundamentally not history in the modern Western academic sense of the word (though it does contain segments that do have value as genuine historical sources), it is nonetheless a species of history-writing that is grounded in a powerful vision of universal natural history, one that does provide places for recent terrestrial history and the histories of regions and locales and much else. (In fact, *purāṇa* first emerged into the textual light of day in the "epic" *Mahābhārata* alongside an ancient genre of historical composition that is closer to the modern Western sense of history, *itihāsa*;[6] but in time *purāṇa* overwhelmed *itihāsa* as a productive genre for recording history and *itihāsa* remained a static genre until it was revived as "history" in modern colonial India.) The *purāṇa* vision was capacious and expansive: the number of distinct *purāṇa* texts multiplied profusely in time, their size was often great, and their contents diverse and complex. It is precisely the extent and complexity of these texts that have prevented scholars from arriving at a just estimation of the true contribution the Hindu *purāṇas* have made to the intellectual history of India.[7] Furthermore, their persisting intractability has more often furnished grounds for negative assessments of their value and of the culture that produced them than for positive engagement with them. I hope this chapter will foster a more adequate estimation of the intellectual-historical value of *purāṇa* as a particular, complex kind of history-writing.

An explanation and discussion of the genre of *purāṇa* (and its crucial sibling *itihāsa*) will prove easier if preceded by a general sketch of the major forms of explicit history-writing found in India up to the time of the firm installation of Islamic rule in northern India about 1200 CE. I will then provide succinct new presentations of *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*, the two major explicit modes of ancient Indian historiography.

History-writing in Ancient India

In India, regular purposeful reference to events of the past is visible in the earliest literature of the sacred Vedas of the brahmin elite (the *Ṛgveda, RV*, circa 1300–1000 BCE): the poet seers who composed these hymns often expressed admiration and gratitude for the past deeds of the Gods, using this praise as a foil to their principal purpose of petitioning the Gods in the present for favor in the future. Terrestrial historical events are recorded and promulgated in about forty *dānastuti* hymns (hymns "praising giving") in the *RV* that contain stanzas praising the generous giving of important chiefs and princes.[8] These stanzas of the *RV* are complemented by extra-*Ṛgvedic nārāśaṃsi* verses (verses "praising the deeds of men") that are recorded in a second stratum of sacred Vedic texts produced some centuries after the *RV*, the *Brāhmaṇas* (prose texts composed by brahmin priests over the centuries between circa 1000 and 500 BCE), which were directed to the praise of particular men who were eminent or generous.[9] These Vedic *Brāhmaṇa* texts also present the first deliberate historical narratives in ancient India: they frequently record accounts of the past actions of Gods and seers as historical precedents and factual accounts in order to explain why this or that detail of complex sacrificial rites was, or should be, of a certain nature, or carried out in a particular way.[10] Here is an example of such an etiological narrative:

> The sacrifice moved away from the Gods,[11] and the Gods were incapable of accomplishing anything; they could not see it. The Gods said to Aditi,[12] "We must come to see the sacrifice by means of you." "Be it so," she said. "Choose whatever you would like." They replied, "You choose what you would like," and she chose this wish: "The initial offerings of sacrifices will be made to me, and their concluding offerings will be made to me." So then, the initial offering is a porridge for Aditi, the concluding offering is a porridge for Aditi.[13] For this was the wish she chose. (Keith 1920: p. 111: *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 1.7.3)

And another:

> The Gods purchased King Soma[14] in the eastern quarter, so it is purchased [by us] in the eastern quarter. (Keith 1920: p. 115: *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 1.12.1)

This kind of narrative report, used in this illustrative way, is what came to be termed *itihāsa*, "history," and collections of such narratives, stored for such illustrative use, became the domain of particular Brahmin textual specialists (Fitzgerald 2012).

Narrative uses of the past developed in the Buddhist tradition in the form of accounts of the life of Prince Siddhārtha of the Śakyas, whose quest to overcome definitively the suffering inherent in life led to the intellectual realizations that enabled him to "extinguish the fire of his craving, and thus his suffering," *nirvāṇa*, and caused him to be regarded as "the Enlightened One," "the Buddha," the revered founder, about 400 BCE, of the Buddhist religion.[15] The pious accounts of his life

were even accompanied by accounts of the last 550 times the being that eventually became Siddhārtha was incarnated. These "birth tales" (*Jātakas*) were told primarily as parables intended to illustrate various Buddhist virtues and pieties, and they use popular animal fables as their material. The Jain religious tradition, which has a number of structural and doctrinal similarities to Buddhism (while being profoundly different in some basic elements of its outlook), also developed a tradition of biography focused upon "the Great Hero," Mahāvīra, who overcame the suffering of life by conquering it through asceticism and thus became "the Jina," "the Conqueror," and the most recent great teacher and organizer of the Jains.[16]

The two great Sanskrit "epics" of ancient India, the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh*; Sukthankar et al. 1933–66) and the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Rm*; Bhatt and Shah 1960–75), which we know well only in written versions from the early centuries of the Common Era, are both long narratives of epoch-making wars of the past (the *MBh* extends across more than 161,500 lines of text, the *Rm* about 40,000 lines).[17] The *MBh* is a multigenerational account of the genesis, course, and denouement of a war between two branches of what was said to be the main dynasty of its day, the Bharatas – a war that ultimately involved all the warrior families of the known world and which was thus a catastrophic "world-war."[18] This account was narrated to the fourth-generation scion of the victorious Bharata phratry four or five decades after the central events were said to have taken place, and it went on to become a pan-Indian tradition of narrative performance that has great vitality still in the twenty-first century.[19] The other extensive Sanskrit "epic" of ancient India, the *Rm* (also still very much alive today), offers a more tightly focused narrative, although it makes thematic use of certain fabulous elements.[20] Both of these accounts relate their sweeping narratives of only vaguely ascertainable "kingdoms" and wars against generally recognizable geographic backdrops, but they offer precious little detail in them that might allow anyone to know exactly when their events were supposed to have taken place.

The *MBh*, though not the *Rm*, is remarkable for being framed and interlaced with numerous complementary narratives (*ākhyānas*), including many narratives of Brahminic tradition labeled "*itihāsa*" or "*purāṇa*."[21] (To repeat, an *itihāsa* is a "report" of some past event[s]; a text of *purāṇa* is a "primordial account of primordial things.") Furthermore, the *MBh* labels itself overall as an *itihāsa*, though it uses other labels as well. On the other hand, the *Rm* completely lacks familiarity with the term *itihāsa* and presents itself as the first instance of the classical tradition of self-conscious poetry in Sanskrit (*kāvya*), a fact that probably suggests a different developmental history. Although, as we shall see, *itihāsa* was the technical name that came to be given to the kind of illustrative narrative reports already noted in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, the word itself was a more general term for a narrative of past events and it came to have a nontechnical use as well.

The Indian literary tradition in the centuries after the completion of the *MBh* and *Rm* came to use the word *itihāsa* as the label for both the Sanskrit epics and their basic narratives. Attesting to this widened sense of the word, the metrical lexicon of Amarasiṃha (sixth century CE?; Vogel 1979: 309–10) glosses *itihāsa* with the plainest

equivalent of "history" we might find anywhere, "*purāvṛttam,*" "(an account of) what happened before, history" (Amarasiṃha 1886: at 1.6.4). In later and modern times in India the *MBh* and *Rm* have been regarded as repositories of the basic history of the world, accounts of the events that launched the current age of the world, the Kali *yuga* (the events of the *MBh*), or of the preceding age, the Dvāpara *yuga* (the events of the *Rm*).[22] In modern India the word *itihāsa* has become the general word for history as a scholarly discipline and school subject. This tradition of usage is particularly remarkable, given that the *MBh* represents the end of new texts being composed as *itihāsas*, or even quoting *itihāsas*.[23]

Although it too appeared clearly first in the *Mahābhārata*, the later history of *purāṇa* is the complete opposite of the dormancy of *itihāsa*: *purāṇa* became the principal genre of explicit Indian historical writing across the first millennium CE and beyond. Eighteen vast, so-called "great, comprehensive, or universal" *purāṇas* (*mahāpurāṇas*) and many more secondary or minor *purāṇas* (*upapurāṇas*) were composed in Sanskrit (Rocher 1986). The striking blend of cosmic and terrestrial history intended within this genre is evident in a widespread early specification of it. A number of *purāṇas* state that there are five fundamental characteristics of a *purāṇa* text:[24] (*sarga*) an account of the origination of the universe from the first cause by way of a number of derivative subordinate causes (with the ultimate return of everything to the original cause and regular repetitions of this cycle without end); (*pratisarga*) an account of the periodic partial dissolution of the universe into the subordinate causes and its subsequent reemergence; (*vaṃśa*) an account of the genealogies of Gods and patriarchs; (*manvantara*) accounts of the intervals of the different Manus (a Manu is the first man and king of a distinct period of time; there are fourteen such periods in each span of the existence of the universe); and, finally, (*vaṃśānucarita*) the histories of the major royal lineages. Such content corresponds to a number of accounts that supplement the main narrative of the *MBh*, and this characterization of *purāṇa* contents has been the subject of much scholarly research, some of it seeking to derive an *ur-purāṇa* text from parallel passages in a number of the extant *purāṇas*.[25]

But much of the content of the extant *purāṇas* goes far beyond this specification of essential topics: some passages in *purāṇa* texts even forecast future time (see Pargiter 1922: 51–53, who discusses the possible historical importance of this shift in perspective), and there is a *purāṇa* entitled "*The Purāṇa of What Will Be*" (*Bhaviṣyatpurāṇa;* see Rocher 1986: 253–54; Pargiter 1922: 45–46; von Stietencron 1995). Another listing of the five characteristics that comes from an undated commentary on Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra (*Kauṭilya 1960) is a more apt inventory of the actual contents of many of the *purāṇas*, as it charters the inclusion of a wealth of ritual and ethical content beyond the cosmic and terrestrial historical matters:[26] accounts of the creation of the universe (*sṛṣṭi*, the same as *sarga*, as described above), of the operations of the universe (*pravṛtti*), of the final reabsorption of the universe (*saṃhāra*), and accounts pertinent to the pursuit of merit from doing pious deeds (*dharma*) and to the pursuit of escape (*mokṣa*) from the misery of rebirth. But some "encyclopedic" *purāṇas* go well beyond even this more capacious inventory (Rocher 1986: 78–80).

In the course of the first millennium CE and beyond the genre tended to become more localized in the "secondary *purāṇas*" and in the derivative genres of *sthālapurāṇas, māhātmyas*, and *purāṇas* of particular ethnic communities (often referred to as "caste *purāṇas*"); these genres have been little studied in general but, as the example of Bakker 1986 shows (just below), they have the potential to reward serious historians with a rich harvest of specific information. *Sthālapurāṇas* are *purāṇic* accounts attached to specific localities, as the "caste *purāṇas*" pertain to a given ethnic group (*jāti*, cognate with *genus*, is the word that designates the fundamental group that makes up the so-called "caste system"; see Rocher 1986: 70–72). *Māhātmyas* are "texts which are composed with the specific purpose of proclaiming the 'greatness' of a variety of things: a place, an auspicious time, a deity, a ritual activity," etc. (Rocher, 70). Numerous *māhātmyas* describe particular sacred geographic locations (including towns, rivers, or mountains), mixing legends and history in the fashion typical of *purāṇas* overall.

"This genre of literature is not only very useful for deepening our knowledge of the cultural and religious history of India in general but also most valuable for those who want to reconstruct the development of regional history and local cults or to gain a deeper insight into various religious institutions" (Gonda 1977: 276). An extremely informative longitudinal study of the entire history of one of India's most important places, Ayodhyā (where the *Rm* says Lord Rāma was born and in which the story of the *Rm* is based), was carried out by Hans Bakker (1986) as part of a reciprocal effort to edit the text of the *Ayodhyāmāhātmya* and study the history of this place with the aid of the textual tradition. Finally, the genre *purāṇa* extended into the several vernacular languages of India, once these became literary vehicles in the early centuries of the second millennium of the Common Era (Rocher 1986: 72–78).

Although there were no new *itihāsas*, there were some other compositions in the Common Era that did endeavor to set down true accounts of particular persons and the events of their lives (often labeled *carita*, "doings, activities, 'adventures'"), even if often these histories were composed by literary artists (*kavis*) striving for various aesthetic effects and patronage in one form or another (they are works of classical *belles lettres*, *kāvya*). *The Account of the Deeds of King Harṣa* by the seventh-century master of Sanskrit prose Bāṇa is one famous example. Another, not famous, is Padmagupta's *Navasāhasāṅkacarita*, describing the accomplishments of the tenth- to eleventh-century Paramara king Sindhurāja. Another is Nayanchandrasuri's fifteenth-century *Hammīramahākāvya* that describes a dramatic conflict between the Rajput king Hammīra and the sultan Alauddin Khilji of Delhi in the mid-thirteenth century. And there are others (Sharma 2003: 16). However, the most famous example of all is Kalhaṇa's celebrated *Rājataraṅgiṇī* in the twelfth century that offers a complete account of the kings of Kāśmīr, beginning with their descent from the great heroes of the *MBh* (Kalhaṇa 1979).[27] A.B. Keith wrote of Kalhaṇa: in all of the abundance of Sanskrit literature, we "have as the nearest approach to a true historian a poet of no mean ability, much industry, and a desire to tell the truth, who had for recent history very fair sources of information" (1928: 145).[28]

Lastly, though not a work of historiography as such, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, "The Handbook for a Kingdom's Prospering" (Kauṭilya 1960/2013), is an extensive systematic treatise on political economy for kings compiled in the four or five centuries spanning the beginning of the Common Era (Thapar 1998: 130). Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* provides one of the most detailed descriptions of the management of an ancient kingdom available in any literature in the history of the world. It is as uniquely valuable as Kalhaṇa's work for assessing the production in India of systematic knowledge on historical matters.

Thus there were two primary genres of explicitly historical composition in ancient India – ancient accounts of the deeds of Gods, seers and kings (*itihāsas*) and the history of the entire cosmos with selected chapters of terrestrial history (*purāṇa*) embedded within. The remainder of this chapter offers presentations of the basic facts and ideas behind these two genres of history-writing.

The Genre *Itihāsa*

As we have seen, the genre, if not the name, *itihāsa* stretches back into the early centuries of the first millennium BCE. There were various types of narrative traditions (*ākhyānas; ākhyāna* is an all-encompassing term for different species of narrative) that existed across the whole length of that millennium at a greater or lesser distance from the hieratic Vedic tradition. By the middle of the millennium, texts known as *itihāsa* and others as *purāṇa* constituted distinct traditions among that congeries of narrative types (Gonda 1975: 198–210).[29] *Itihāsa* and *purāṇa* were likened to the Veda occasionally, which probably signified that large aggregations of them were retained in memory by specialists in each tradition, ready to be given voice as needed.

As was noted previously, both *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* have their first clearly designated, extended attestations in the *MBh*, which was committed to writing around the beginning of the Common Era, and what we see there of *itihāsa* is the same kind of application of recorded knowledge of the past in the service of a previously established discourse that we saw in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, but now with the label *itihāsa* attached. The *MBh* developed from one or more bardic narrative traditions and was recast and amplified by some elements of brahmin society (Fitzgerald 2010a), and this amplification and reinforcement often took the form of cited *itihāsas*, some of which contained *purāṇa* matter.[30] Both *itihāsas* and *purāṇas*, as we see them in the *MBh*, are narratives dealing with things that "happened before." The word *itihāsa* itself, as we shall see shortly, designates an account that tells "That's how it was." A *purāṇa* too is an account of what was or what happened, but, as we have seen, it is thematically concerned with certain fundamental matters and, as we shall see more fully soon, its sense of the past is special, where that of *itihāsa* is general.

Similarly to its ancestor in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, an *itihāsa* report in the *MBh* may be a simple narrative, a dialogue, or even a traditional saying or verse. However, in

the *MBh*, many of the quoted *itihāsas* are long instructions delivered by an authoritative figure on any of a variety of topics. But, reflecting its origins as a product of Brahminic learning, the great majority of *itihāsas* quoted in the *MBh* (121 of the 153 labeled instances) occur in its long didactic segments (which make up over 27 percent of the text's approximately 161,500 lines and treat matters political and social – extremely important to Brahmins promulgating a particular vision of polity and society – as well as philosophical and religious). In a recent paper Muneo Tokunaga surveyed all 153 of the labeled instances of *itihāsa* in the *MBh* and distinguished five different types of content among them – 18 are "factual," 55 "moral," 10 "political," 48 "philosophical," and 22 "religious" (2009: 25 n. 8). In the epic, both *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* treat often of Gods, seers, princes, and the more abstract philosophical and theological accounts that deal with similarly fundamental realities. Thus in the case of the philosophical and religious instances, there are a number of occurrences in which the content of the *itihāsa* is *purāṇa* and is even labeled as such.[31]

The functioning of *itihāsas* in the *MBh*, as demonstrated by Tokunaga's survey, conforms closely to a gloss given us by Durga (a twelfth-century CE commentator on an ancillary text of the late Vedic period, the *Nirukta*): "Whether it be about the Gods, the internal composition of persons, or the physical world – any matter set forth in order to elucidate the meaning of an instruction is called an *itihāsa*" (Sieg 1902: 26; Horsch 1966: 13; Tokunaga 2009: 27 n. 12).[32] In its typical use in the *MBh* an *itihāsa* is not simply a narrative, it is a narrative told in relation to some normative matter under discussion, a deliberately illustrative application of an account that already stands in cultivated social memory. The specificity of the narrative as a delimited report of a past event, its being deliberately remembered and transmitted by tradition, and its being conceived as an applied form of knowledge are what make *itihāsa* a particular form of historiography. But as we have seen and shall discuss further, the term did not stay confined to this technical niche; it came to be used more broadly to refer to the whole of the *MBh* and later others applied it to the *Rm* as well.

The applied use of historical narratives as reports intended to illustrate a relevant fact about some matter was part of an extensive "discourse habit" of ancient Brahminic culture. Tokunaga points out the connections between the *MBh*'s citation of *itihāsas* and the elaborated Brahminic practice of anchoring discussions with concrete illustrations. The way the MBh typically cites an *itihāsa* as an illustration pertinent to a discussion is by preceding the recitation of the *itihāsa* with the formulaic phrase, "On this they cite this ancient *itihāsa*" (*atrāpy udāharantīmam itihāsaṃ purātanam*). The formula as well as the practice anticipate, or parallel, the formal step, stipulated in Indian logic, of giving a concrete illustration of the relationship being asserted as the ground of an inference; they do so both functionally and terminologically. As Tokunaga explains (2009: 24), the verb *udāharanti* is cognate with the technical term *udāharaṇa*, the third member of the classical five-member process of inference developed in the school of Indian logic (*nyāya*). The *udāharaṇa* "in an interesting contrast to Western traditional formal logic … indicates that the universal

proposition which is the logical ground of the inference is based on particular and factual instances" (Radhakrishnan and Moore 1967: 357). Tokunaga quite rightly emphasizes that the *itihāsas* of the *MBh* represent an old element of Brahminic discussion that stretched across the whole of the first millennium BCE, from the ritual discussions of the *Brāhmaṇas* through the development of the *MBh*. At one level, the process of citing authoritative precedents and illustrations in discussion and debate is no more than an ordinary, common-sense phenomenon. But it is remarkable that this process became regularized, formalized, and eventually defined as part of a considered theory of argumentation and demonstration.

Before concluding this presentation of *itihāsa*, a few words need to be said about its complicated name. The name of the genre derives ultimately from the ancient phraseology of discussions in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts and elsewhere in which quoted illustrations are marked by the quotative particle *iti*, which in turn is followed by the particle *ha*, which signifies that what has just been said connects to what was said before the quotation and completes or concludes that prior thought in some way (Delbrück 1888). The word *itihāsa* (as the name that came to be given to quoted narratives used in this way) never lost its association with that context of oral discussion, with that praxis of quotation, or that phraseology, though illustrating this fact is beyond the scope of this chapter. At the same time, however, the word seems not to have arisen from the above described phraseology in a simple, straight line. Rather the word came to signify "a report of 'how it (something) was'" in a separate development of the old "*iti ha*" phrasing. Again, the details are too intricate and complicated to demonstrate here, but the story involves the phrasing "*iti ha*" fusing into a new particle "*itiha*" which was used to conclude a series of statements in a summary fashion, signifying something like "And so …," which would be followed by some explicit conclusion (Fitzgerald 2012). At some point in time a past form of the verb to be (*āsa*, meaning "it was") was fused to the *itiha*, giving rise to the word *itihāsa* that then was used to refer to reports that told "how it was" – not unlike the way Walter Cronkite concluded the CBS Evening News for many years by saying, "And that's the way it is."

The Genre *Purāṇa*

Unlike the *itihāsas*, but like the *nārāśaṃsī* verses, it would seem that the genre *purāṇa* was always defined by its content, and that content was basically "the past." The word fundamentally means "before, former, early, old," and it would seem that *purāṇa* was always a genre of text dedicated to all kinds of "old" matters (notwithstanding the fact that there is sometimes also attention to the future, as noted above). But the idea that is fundamental to this genre of Brahminic discourse was probably never simply the age or antiquity of the matters recounted. Some uses of the word *purāṇa* also conveyed the additional, critically important sense of *being the first instance of something that is still current* – primacy, primordiality – a sense which not only contains within it a sense of the normative but also often awakens

senses of sacredness, of transcendent holiness, by virtue of the breathtaking way something vast in space or time dwarfs the human subject who contemplates it, and arouses a sense of awe. This sense of the word is evident in its earliest attestations, is apparent in many of its uses when we first see it clearly in the *MBh*, and is central to much of the genre *purāṇa* in the many *purāṇas* of the Common Era.

In a study (Rocher 1977) preliminary to his compendious treatment of the literary *purāṇas* (Rocher 1986), the distinguished Sanskritist Ludo Rocher pointed out that in the *Ṛgveda* the word *purāṇá* is often used in connection with elements of the world that recur or are renewable, such as dawn or the power or friendship of the two Aśvin Gods for certain clans (Rocher 1977: 12).[33] In these uses, *purāṇá* things are things that are not only old or ancient but have existed "since time immemorial" (Rocher 1977: 6, 12). What is *purāṇá* exists across time in the present through "repeated renewal and rejuvenation" (like the examples just mentioned; 19). And further, Rocher writes, "in most occurrences in the *RV* the constant repetition and identical renewal of things ancient, implied in the term *purāṇá*, are not determined by men; they are governed by rules laid down by supernatural powers or by the necessities of cosmic order" (20). What is *purāṇá* is thus concerned with special matters that bring with themselves a special sense of time that connects timelessly universal realities – the same things occurring over and over – to contingent beings – in that we who are dealing with this matter today are formed in the newest instance in the series.

The classical *purāṇas* convey knowledge of the primordial matters of the universe, and typically present themselves as primordial accounts that stem from Gods (primordial beings) or seers (primordial men). The primordial matters they teach are the realities and events to which we are all connected for all our time, the most fundamental realities human beings need to know as they think about their lives, families, or rulers, where they have come from, and what possibilities stand before them in life: matters such as God, the creation of the world, the reabsorption and recreation of the world in eternally alternating cycles, the "historical intervals" (*manvantaras*) nested within those cycles, and the genealogies of seers and kings – the issues summed up in the lists of five topics mentioned earlier. They explain how and why the world is the way it is, how and why the typical things of our world began – cosmology and philosophy and its anthropomorphic cousin theology that in the *purāṇas* ordinarily takes the form of a "cosmological monotheism" (see Malinar 2007: 237–241), in which the old polytheism of the Vedic religion finds its place in lower orders of creation derived from the unique Supreme Lord (conceived in different theological traditions as the Supreme Being Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, or Śiva, or as the Goddess, Devī).

The typical *purāṇa* account begins with first principles and describes the development of the known world from them, usually through the agency of the Supreme Lord and his lower level manifestations. The following account (edited and adapted from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) is a good indication of the kind of cosmogonic themes one finds in the *purāṇas*. These accounts typically begin with the state between the end of one creation and the beginning of the next:

There was no day and no night; no sky and no earth; no darkness and no light; there was nothing then but that One that cannot be known by any organ of sense nor even by the intellect: *brahman*, the source of the world and of souls in the world (2.23). [There are four aspects of God (Viṣṇu): his essence, his form as Time, and his two-fold Body, made up of the Primordium (the principle that gives rise to the physical universe), on the one hand, and, on the other, the collectivity of eternal Souls that will be embodied in that physical universe:] There are said to be two realities besides the essence of Viṣṇu – Primordium and Soul. Those two are (alternately) held together and put apart by another form of His – that other form is called Time (2.24) … The Lord Time is without beginning, and no end of Him is known. From Him come the unbroken series of the Creations, Spans-of-Existence, and Dissolutions of the universe (2.26) … And then, the time for creation having arrived [again], that supreme *brahman*, that Supreme Being who comprises the whole universe in Himself, who pervades it all, who is the Master of all that is, the Soul of all beings, the Supreme Lord (2.28) Hari (= Viṣṇu) entered into the mutable, that is, the Primordium, and into the immutable, that is, the collectivity of all the Souls, because he wished to do so, and set it (the Primordium) moving (2.29).

Once set in motion by God, the unitary Primordium begins to differentiate internally and gives rise to a sequence of principles that are initially very fine and correspond to principles of psyche, but grow progressively more coarse and become the diverse-material-universe in which beings act, are compensated justly for the ethical quality of their actions (the principles of *dharma*, Right Action leading to good results, and the opposite), and ultimately seek escape (*mokṣa*) from embodied existence to enjoy eternal spiritual communion with God. Though some of the core elements of the oldest *purāṇas* share the same basic text, as Pargiter 1913 and Kirfel 1927 showed, details of the *purāṇa* cosmologies vary and the subsequent theologies, philosophies, and ethics they present are numerous and different from each other.

In the train of a cosmology such as that just described, the typical *purāṇa* recounts the deeds of the first seers, kings, and princes that gave our world its first social and political forms, entering the realm of terrestrial history particularly in the account of the histories of the major royal lineages (*vaṃśānucarita*). A handful of modern, Western-oriented historians have studied these histories with great care in an effort to glean reliable details of India's ancient history from them.[34] Vincent A. Smith led the way, showing "in the specific case of the Āndhra dynasty that the list of kings and the duration of their reigns, as preserved in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, are basically correct" (Rocher 1986: 117, referring to Smith 1902–03). Smith "used the purāṇic king lists repeatedly in his authoritative Early History of India" (Rocher, 119, referring to Smith 1924). Next F.E. Pargiter (1913) studied the text of the *vaṃśānucarita* portion of several *purāṇas* and scoured the lists of kings contained in them for firm historical details regarding Indian dynasties. Pargiter published a compendious treatment of his findings in *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* (1922). Fifty years later, R. Morton Smith (1973), holding a similar belief in the basic reliability of the historical information reported in the *purāṇas*, published the

results of his own assiduous sifting through the purāṇic accounts in a historical reconstruction entitled *Dates and Dynasties in Earliest India*. "He established the chronology of all kings, both prehistoric and historic, from about 1800 B.C. until A.D. 249" (Rocher 1986: 119).

Rocher aptly points out in regard to such efforts that "One characteristic feature of recent historical research is the search for extraneous evidence which corroborates the data contained in the purāṇas and, as a result, is considered to lift the suspicion which these data might otherwise be regarded with …, [including] epigraphy and archaeology, popular sources, Buddhist and Jaina literatures generally, and the Sinhalese chronicle Mahāvaṃsa and the Jaina purāṇas in particular" (121). This need was echoed by Heinrich von Stietencron (1995) in a recent critical examination of the purāṇic genealogies as part of an effort by a team of scholars to reexamine evidence bearing upon the dating of the Buddha. Pointing out that "while the purāṇic material is unequivocal and consistent, it cannot validate itself in terms of absolute dates," von Stietencron went on to criticize those who hold "the view expressed by some critics that the lists of kings, despite the occurrence of the names of certain historical personages in them, is sheer fiction, to be classified not as history but as brahminical creation of myths … Regrettably most of these critics have not taken the trouble to examine anew the text, according to the primary sources" (1995: 222). Von Stietencron then went on to comment in detail on the dynastic reconstructions of R.M. Smith: "Both of [his] works are stimulating but throw up serious methodological problems. It has long been known that the purāṇic lists of kings are in need of correction. The question, though, is according to which point of view and what criteria they can be corrected. In … Smith, the text is partially interpreted but also partially manipulated …; he corrects it not only on the basis of the textual variants but also makes changes in the text according to his own idiosyncrasies … The aim of this reconstruction is to arrive at a text which does not, in any way, contradict the current historical information we have from other sources" (223). But, von Stietencron adds, "Our current state of knowledge … is highly precarious. If, for example, the date of the Buddha, which is a cornerstone of [Smith's] reconstruction, were changed the greater part of his results could become invalidated" (223). Von Stietencron moves into his own examination of the *vaṃśānucarita* with the following summary judgment on Smith's work: "This method [Smith's, just described] is, to say the least, questionable … However, the value of Smith's work lies in the attempt to evaluate the material seriously and to reintroduce it into the arena of discussion, a good 30 years after Kirfel" (224). I will close this brief discussion of the modern historical utilization of the *purāṇas* by pointing out that Romila Thapar reads the *purāṇas* more synthetically, looking for and reasoning from general information about different sectors of society and their various institutions, such as elites, guilds, or polities (Thapar 1986).

But the *vaṃśānucarita* accounts occupy relatively small locales or regions within the vast and universal sweep of *purāṇa* matters,[35] and even these events are presumed to recur regularly in the breathtakingly long, eternally repeating cycles of

time postulated in the cosmology of the *purāṇas*: in the *yugas* ("eras"), within the *mahāyugas* ("super-eras"), within the *kalpas* ("eons"), within the *mahākalpas* ("super-eons"), within a life-span of the God Brahmā, one of the frequent names of the creative demi-urge of the Supreme Being – each of Brahmā's days and each of his nights spans one "eon," that is, 4.32 billion solar years. There are different variations and permutations of the hierarchy of levels of this general scheme, but they all assert basically the same "natural history" of the universe. There is a single, vast universal process that can be known and described. Our world and our lives are the products of this process and find a place in it, but the principal concern of the genre is to describe only the major realities and only the most important persons and authorities in the history of the cosmos. We are currently in the seventh of the fourteen *manvantaras* of the current *kalpa*, presided over by Manu Vaivasvata (the Manu "descended from Vivasvat, the Sun"), and within some of these ages there are accounts of the doings of seers and kings, who are similar to the prophets and kings of the Abrahamic religions, with the seers being the forebears of any brahmins who are active in the time present of a given *purāṇa* text. Brahmins active in that present are the ones who are composing the *purāṇa* accounts and conveying them to the public.

Concluding Reflections

Though the term *itihāsa* started out by referring to a particular, specialized mode of historical narrative, we saw that later Indian tradition used a more general, non-technical sense of the word to refer to the *MBh* and the *Rm* as accounts of two important catastrophic transitions in the history of the world, and as containers of many subordinate and collateral historical episodes in a general sense of the word *itihāsa*. This in spite of the fact that the word was completely unknown in the process of the formation of the *Rm*. Though the *MBh* not only contains within itself many *itihāsas*, in both the technical and nontechnical senses of the word, it also uses the term for the whole of itself. I believe it does so both because its authors thought of it as a historical narrative in that more general, less technical sense of the term, and also because even that more general sense of the word still had embedded within it some sense that an *itihāsa* was an illustrative lesson of some kind – in this case for the edification of rulers. As noted earlier, the history of the great Bhārata war was said to have been composed by a brahmin (Vyāsa) who was centrally active in the events narrated, and recounted first by one of this brahmin's disciples to the fourth generation scion of the Pāṇḍava heroes of the history. In the roughly contemporaneous *Arthaśāstra*, Kauṭilya recommends that princes spend their mornings in mastering such practical arts as horsemanship and weaponry and their afternoons in listening to recitations of *itihāsas* (Kauṭilya 1960: 1.5.13–14), alluding plainly to the applied purposes of *itihāsas*. Clearly, the *MBh* presented itself with the idea that this history is told to make a difference in the actions of rulers. Nor was the difference envisioned to be casual or merely general.

While the composition of the *MBh* brought the old genre of *itihāsa*-composition to a halt, its history of the Bharatas played an especially important role in reestablishing the elite position of the Brahminic tradition in the wake of the cultural and political disruptions (after about 500 BCE down to about 150 BCE) of the ancient pattern of ritual patronage that had created what can only be described as a "Golden Age of Brahminic Vedic Culture" in north central India in the first half of the first millennium BCE (Fitzgerald 2010a). In the wake of the rise to imperial supremacy of the unsympathetic eastern imperial rulers (the Nandans and the Mauryans, about 340 and 315 BCE, respectively) and the successes of the new Buddhist and Jain religious elites they patronized – at the expense of the brahmins who enjoyed a prior monopoly of patronage in the kingdoms of north-central India[36] – some creative brahmins, it seems, turned an old *Bhārata* epic into a new, "*Great*" *Bhārata* that chartered and argued (narratively and didactically) for a pattern of kingship that subordinated the ruler and the whole of society to Brahminic privilege and authority. These creative "historians" infused that older *Bhārata* tale with thrilling new divine and semidivine agents and themes and seized the enunciatory function of ancient Indian society with their new *itihāsa*. The telling of this new tale put brahmins into a new role in ancient Indian society: they went from being purveyors of esoteric wisdom, talking primarily among themselves around their ritual fires, to addressing publicly kings and the populations upon whom kings depended. Their persuasion was highly, if not universally, successful and they secured an enduring economic niche for brahmins and their cultural preoccupations – the texts and praxes of the "Sanskrit cosmopolis" (Pollock 2006) – for most of the next two millennia.

As alluded to earlier, the *MBh itihāsa* carried its *purāṇa* sibling along with it on this ascent to enduring authority. And because *purāṇa* articulated an encompassing new vision of the cosmos and the operations of divine power within it, and also provided unlimited openings for more immediate and local matters within its cosmos, *purāṇa* provided a more enduring and elastic framework for the Brahminic model of world, polity, and society than did the *MBh* or the other history, the *Rm*. Also, in a variety of powerful ways that cannot be explored here, *purāṇa* proved to be an effective, outwardly-oriented rearticulation of the sacred energy brahmins had represented in society earlier through the mysteries of the Vedas and the Vedic rites that had been removed some distance from the hearing and direct witness of many. That purāṇic restatement of the Vedas faced few challenges across the first millennium of the Common Era in those parts of India where the rulers adopted it.[37]

But not only were the *purāṇas* the new principal emblem of the sacred power brahmins offered kings and society in exchange for their authority, privileges, and protection; the very concept of the primordial that grounds the genre *purāṇa became* the paradigm of all authority in Brahminic culture, an authority that, in principle, trumps the voices of all others. The Veda is not quite as primordial as the Supreme Being, with whom the cosmological monotheism of many *purāṇas* begins and ends, but the Veda and the seers who first recited it among men were created first of all, and the brahmins of any given place and time are descendants of that

primordial revelation. But in spite of this secure anchorage, or perhaps because of it, the texts rooted in primordial realities and the men who were empowered by them, were able to absorb the specificity of local phenomena and assimilate particular places, rites, divine images, etc., into the cosmos laid out by purāṇic texts.[38] But what this cosmos did not prompt anyone to do was to take pains to specify the details of local events and persons in terms of their contingency, that is apart from their connections to primordial phenomena. As a consequence, most of what is presented in *purāṇa* is timeless in human terms.

Notes

1   In this vein see too Mill 1976, xxvi (written in 1817): "As the manners, institutions, and attainments of the Hindus have been stationary for many ages, in beholding the Hindus of the present day we are beholding the Hindus of many ages past, and are carried back, as it were, into the deepest recesses of antiquity."

2   See Thapar 1986: 353–54 and passim, particularly her fundamental distinction between historical knowledge that is "embedded" in an account that has a different purpose, as opposed to "externalized history" – "which tends to bring embedded consciousness into the open, as it were, and to be more aware of its deliberate use of the past."

3   Now the dean of historians of ancient India, Thapar has been producing careful works charting the history of India and reflections upon the method and practice of finding and interpreting the evidence furnished by the peoples of India's past. An interesting contribution to both enterprises is her "Society and Historical Consciousness: The *Itihāsa-purāṇa* Tradition" (Thapar 1986, republished several times). See also Thapar 1996 (a particularly important essay) and 2000 (a collection of a large number of Thapar's historical and historiographical writings). The present volume contains one of her most recent contributions.

4   On the implicit side of this register: Thapar often goes against the grain of the texts she is working with. She begins her essay on "The *Itihāsa-purāṇa* Tradition" with: "More frequently, however, … [historical] consciousness is not always visible and has to be prised from the sources which tend to conceal it" (1986: 353). On the explicit side: In Sharma's initial survey of the "History of the Notion that Hinduism has No Sense of History," he summarizes his view as follows: "It is clear then that the Hindus could be said to lack a sense of history in several senses … Even when secular literature did evolve, history was at least neglected. Such historical records as were preserved were preserved haphazardly. And when literary treatment of historical themes was accepted as a legitimate genre it took the form of historical romance rather than historiography" (2003: 16).

5   Pollock 1989 points out that one of the most important "de-historicizing" arguments of India's brahmin elite in the first several centuries CE was the formal theory of the timelessness of the Vedas articulated in *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy. This formal theory is one manifestation of the wider and more fundamental sense of the importance of "the primordial" I describe below.

6   For a discussion of the *Mahābhārata* as an "epic," see Fitzgerald 2010a.

7   I write *purāṇa* when referring to the genre or generic instances of it and *Purāṇa* when referring implicitly or explicitly to one or more particular named *Purāṇas*.

8 See Gonda 1975: 170–71 and Thapar 1986: 143–44 for a brief discussion of these as a kind of historical record.

9 These verses were likely composed, remembered, and recited by an elite distinct from the Vedic seers and priests; see Horsch 1966: 11.

10 In my judgment, the word "myth" should be eschewed in discussions of these and similar matters; the word imports too many divergent and inherently problematic themes. While the demonstrable facticity of an account, or the opposite, do ultimately concern all of us, what matters in a discussion of ancient historiography is whether an account is seriously asserted to be factual rather than fictitious, and these are.

11 A crisis that is recounted several times in this *Brāhmaṇa*. Its specifics are obscure, but we get a clearer idea from another passage that introduces the description of the Pravargya rite (this will serve as another example of the way events are narrated etiologically in the *Brāhmaṇas*): "The sacrifice moved away from the Gods, saying, "I will not be your food." The Gods said, "No! You will be our food." The Gods then rent the sacrifice asunder. But dismembered, it was of no use to them. The Gods said: "No! Dismembered like this, it is no good. Come on, we have to put the sacrifice back together." "Be it so!" they said, and they put it back together. Having put it back together, they said to the two Aśvins [two of their own number, twin horsemen of the twilights], "Repair it." The two Aśvins are the healers among the Gods; the Aśvins are *adhvaryus* [the *adhvaryus* were the priests of the rite who performed the manual labor of it]. So then those two *adhvaryus* brought in the big pot ordinarily used to boil the milk offered ritually to them. Having brought it in they said: "O Brahman [the supervising priest at the rite], let us proceed with the Pravargya rite. Reciter, begin the praises" (see Keith 1920: p.121: *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 1.18.1–3.). See Delbrück 1888: p. 200, #171.

12 The Goddess of the "Unbounded" who was the mother of several of the most important Gods worshipped in Vedic religion. Her divine offspring were known by the matronymic Ādityas and included seven major Vedic deities, including Varuṇa and the Sun.

13 The idea is that the "Unbounded" Goddess defines the limits of what is "bounded" within her. Thus, if the first and last offerings are made to her, the offerings made in between will go to the Gods who are contained within that bounded area.

14 The plant (the "King of all Plants") from which the stimulating juice Soma was extracted.

15 A still useful general survey of what is known of the life of the Buddha may be found in Thomas 1931, particularly the introduction. A very great deal of research in the past few decades has aimed to pin down the dates of the Buddha's life. A useful discussion of much of it is available in Cousins 1996. See also Bechert 1995; Narain 2003.

16 Mahāvīra appears to have been a contemporary of the Buddha, as he is mentioned in early Buddhist texts. The Jain tradition was slower to come to the use of writing for its sacred texts than were the Buddhists and the brahmins, and it is correspondingly more difficult to perceive clearly in the centuries before the Common Era. The Jains see Mahāvīra as only the last of a series of 24 great leaders, *tīrthaṃkaras* ("Makers of the Crossing" between the flood of rebirth [*saṃsāra*] and the absolute beatitude that is beyond *saṃsāra*), for whom they also have biographical accounts; see Dundas 1992.

17 For comprehensive accounts of both epics and the scholarship on them see Brockington 1998.

18 Many serious historical scholars, Western and Indian alike, accept the historicity of the war described in the *MBh* (e.g., von Stietencron 1996: 248, who proffers the date of 900 BCE). Major specialists of the *MBh* such as Alf Hiltebeitel, Madeleine Biardeau, and myself tend to view the account in the written Sanskrit text as a literary and ideological

reworking of legends of some ancient great war (legends that may or may not go back to a "war of ten kings" mentioned in the *RV*; see Witzel 2005) informed by keen observations of the generic operations of politics and warfare.

19 "Pan-Indian" also signifies the entire area of direct Indian influence across all of South-East Asia. For a fuller general description of the *MBh*, see Fitzgerald 2010b.

20 Like the *MBh*, the *Rm* became a "pan-Indian" narrative and performance tradition, and it is even more alive today than is the *MBh*, not least in Hindu diaspora communities throughout the world. Its central story is a tale of abduction. While she accompanied her husband for fourteen years of banishment in the wilderness, Sītā, the wife of Rāma, was abducted by the ten-headed monster Rāvaṇa, who presided over the most advanced urban landscape of the age, on the island of Laṅkā. Rāma allied himself with swarms of monkeys and bears, assailed Rāvaṇa's citadel, and regained his wife. Numerous different versions of the story are told in many traditions and languages; the classical, and main, version is that in Sanskrit by Vālmīki, the "first classical poet" (Vālmīki 1984–). Richman 1991, 2001 offer some access to the multiplicity of the *Rm* literary tradition.

21 The usage I generally employ is to refer to the priests-intellectuals of ancient India as "brahmins," commensurately with the names of members of the other three social orders, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and śūdras. I capitalize the word Brahminic, however, as it refers to the particular religious and intellectual tradition of the brahmins, distinct from Buddhist, Jain, Hellenistic, Christian, etc.

22 The theory of the world's ages, *yugas*, is a cosmological theme typical of *purāṇa* and this view of matters reflects the absorption of historical reportage into purāṇic cosmography that I shall outline below. For a recent account of the development of this theme, see González-Reimann 2002. In the guise of an account describing the Kali *yuga* there is a curious report (appended to a work of astrology) of the history of the break-up of the Śuṅga Empire about 185 BCE and its political aftermath, including the Greek invasion of India in the second century BCE. This work is called the *Yugapurāṇa* (the "*Purāṇa* of the Eras") and is "a matter of fact chronicle, very different from the 'historical' sections in the purāṇas" and "important primarily as a historical document" (Rocher 1986: 254).

23 There are surprisingly few quotations of narratives labeled *itihāsas* in *purāṇas* or later commentaries (see Gonda 1977: 122 for one instance). Until relatively recently it seems that the term *itihāsa* was confined to references to the *MBh* and *Rm*; until modern times it seems almost no new works calling themselves "*itihāsas*" were composed. This general impression is borne out by a check of works beginning with "*itihāsa*" in vol. 2 of the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* of Sanskrit manuscripts (Raghavan 1966).

24 The most frequently cited comes from the *Purāṇa of the God Wind*: *sargaś ca pratisargaś ca vaṃśo manvantarāṇi ca / vaṃśānucaritaṃ ceti purāṇaṃ pañcalakṣaṇam* (*Vāyupurāṇa* 4.10; see Rocher 1986: 24–26).

25 Pargiter 1913 was the first major effort in this direction. A major school of *purāṇa* investigation based upon this theme was launched by Kirfel 1927 and has produced important and interesting results. See Rocher 1986: 24–30 and 43–45.

26 The *Jayamaṅgalā ad Kauṭilīyārthaśāstra* 1.5.12–14 (quoted from Rocher 1986: 26): *sṛṣṭipravṛttisaṃhāradharmamokṣaprayojanam / brahmabhir vividhaiḥ proktaṃ purāṇaṃ pañcalakṣaṇam.*

27 The first good edition of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* was published by M. Aurel Stein in 1892; his translation with notes and ancillary materials was published in two volumes in 1900.

28   As Keith's subject here is the absence of true historiography in India, he completes this sentence by continuing: "but the most ardent admirer of Kalhaṇa would not for a moment claim for him that he could be matched even with Herodotos, and it must be remembered that no other writer approaches even remotely the achievement of Kalhaṇa."

29   The most focused work on these once vexed matters prior to Horsch 1966 was Sieg 1902. Horsch's research, including his discussions of Sieg's findings and arguments, has been incorporated into the more general surveys of India's Vedic and Purāṇic literatures in Gonda 1975 and Rocher 1986.

30   Other labeled kinds of textual material are quoted in the *MBh* as well: "song" (*gītā*, usually some sort of recitative), "recital" (*kīrtana*), "verse" (*śloka, gāthā*), pronouncement (*vacana, vākya*), etc., but here I attend only to narrative material.

31   For example, though both sub-texts are introduced formally as "ancient *itihāsas*," the instructional dialog of the sage Bhṛgu to Bharadvāja (*MBh* 12.175–85) and that of the Progenitor Manu to the great seer Bṛhaspati (*MBh* 12.194–99) present expositions of "primordial" matters (the first cause of all, the appearance of the universe from that, the fundamental goods that beings can know and attain, etc.), the second of the two characterizing different elements of its discourse with the adjective *purāṇa*. The first of these *itihāsas* was recited in response to explicitly cosmological questions and the second in response to a question regarding the most salubrious course of life.

32   My translation here switches the order of the first two subject matters mentioned to make the English clear more easily.

33   When discussing the Vedic use of the word I quote it in its Vedic form, that is, with its tonic accent: *purāṇá*.

34   See Rocher 1986: 115–131 for a comprehensive survey of the efforts of historians of ancient India to use the *purāṇás* as historical sources and on the critical responses pro and con.

35   R.M. Smith's reconstructed text comprises only 728 units of two-line verse.

36   It was not that the Nandan and Mauryan empires failed to offer financial support to brahmins after they rose to hegemonic power in the middle of the fourth century; rather they asserted the ruler's supremacy over brahmins and underscored that fact by supporting rival elites (Buddhists and Jains) who lack all connection to the proper ground of transcendent authority, the Veda.

37   Only a few chapters have been written of the detailed history of the spread of the brahminic ideology of polity and society across the Indian subcontinent, and of the at least occasional resistance to it, as, for example, by the Lingayat movement of twelfth-century Karnataka.

38   Some of the dynamism of this assimilation is nicely presented and discussed by V. Narayana Rao (1993). Bailey (2010: 10) discusses this phenomenon as part of a broader discussion of the differences between the *Mahābhārata* and the *purāṇas* as two different types of historical discourse.

References

Amarasiṃha. 1886. *Amarakośa, with the Commentary of Maheśvara*. Ed. R.S. Talekar. 3rd edn. Bombay.

Bailey, G. 2010. "Hermeneutical Glosses on Scholarly Work on the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas." In S. Pollock (ed.), *Epic and Argument in Sanskrit Literary History: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Goldman*, 1–16. Delhi.

Bakker, H. 1986. *Ayodhyā: The History of Ayodhyā from the 7th Century BC to the Middle of the 18th Century; Its Development with Special Reference to the* Ayodhyāmāhātmya *and to the Worship of Rāma according to the* Agastyasaṃhitā. Groningen.

Bechert, H. 1995. *When Did the Buddha Live? The Controversy on the Dating of the Historical Buddha*. Delhi.

Bhatt, G.H., D.R. Mankad, U.P. Shah, et al. (eds.). 1960–75. *The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition*. 7 vols. Baroda.

Brockington, J. 1998. *The Sanskrit Epics*. Leiden.

Cousins, L.S. 1996. "The Dating of the Historical Buddha: A Review Article." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd ser. 6.1: 57–63. Available online at http://indology.info/papers/cousins/ [accessed July 2013].

Delbrück, B. 1888. *Altindische Syntax*. Halle.

Dundas, P. 1992. *The Jains*. London.

Fitzgerald, J.L. 2010a. "No Contest between Memory and Invention: The Invention of the Pāṇḍava Heroes of the *Mahābhārata*." In D. Konstan and K.A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Epic and History*, 103–21. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Fitzgerald, J.L. 2010b. "*Mahābhārata*." In K. Jacobsen (ed.), *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, 72–94. Leiden.

Fitzgerald, J.L. 2012. "*Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* Revisited." Presented at the 222nd Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society in Boston.

Gonda, J. 1975. *Vedic Literature (Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas)*. Wiesbaden.

Gonda, J. 1977. *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit*. Wiesbaden.

González-Reimann, L. 2002. *The Mahābhārata and the Yugas: India's Great Epic Poem and the Hindu System of World Ages*. New York.

Horsch, P. 1966. *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur*. Bern.

Kalhaṇa. 1979. *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*. Ed. and trans. M.A. Stein. Delhi.

Kauṭilya. 1960 (2013). *The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*. Ed. and trans. R.P. Kangle. 3 vols. Bombay. New trans. by P. Olivelle. Oxford, 2013.

Keith, A.B. (trans.). 1920. *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas: The Aitareya and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda*. Cambridge.

Keith, A.B. 1928. *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. London.

Kirfel, W. 1927. *Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa. Versuch einer Textgeschichte*. Bonn.

Macdonell, A.A. 1900. *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. London.

Malinar, A. 2007. *The Bhagavad Gītā: Doctrines and Contexts*. Cambridge.

Mill, J. 1976. *History of British India*. Ed. W. Thomas. Chicago. First publ. London, 1817.

Narain, A.K. 2003. *The Date of the Historical Śākyamuni Buddha*. New Delhi.

Narayana Rao, V. 1993. "Purāṇa as Brahminic Ideology." In W. Doniger (ed.), *Purāṇa Perennis*, 85–100. Albany.

Pargiter, F.E. 1913. *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age, with Introduction and Notes*. London.

Pargiter, F.E. 1922. *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*. London.

Peissel, M. 1984. *The Ants' Gold*. London.

Pollock, S. 1989. "Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109.4: 603–610.

Pollock, S. 2006. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley.

Radhakrishnan, S., and C. Moore. 1967. *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton.

Raghavan, V. 1966. *New Catalogus Catalogorum: An Alphabetical Register of Sanskrit and Allied Works and Authors*, II. Madras.

Richman, P. 1991. *Many Rāmāyaṇas*. Berkeley.

Richman, P. 2001. *Questioning Rāmāyaṇas: A South Asian Tradition*. Berkeley.

Rocher, L. 1977. "The meaning of *purāṇa* in the *Ṛgveda*." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 21: 5–24.

Rocher, L. 1986. *The Purāṇa*. Wiesbaden.

Sharma, A. 2003. *Hinduism and Its Sense of History*. New Delhi.

Sieg, E. 1902. *Die Sagenstoffe des Ṛgveda und die indische Itihāsatradition*. Stuttgart.

Smith, R.M. 1973. *Dates and Dynasties in Earliest India; Translation and Justification of a Critical Text of the Purāṇa Dynasties*. Delhi.

Smith, V.A. 1902–03. "Andhra History and Coinage." *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 56: 649–75; 57: 605–627.

Smith, V.A. 1924. *The Early History of India from 600 BC to the Muhammadan Conquest, Including the Invasion of Alexander the Great*. 4th edn. Rev. S.M. Edwardes. Oxford.

Stein, M.A. (ed.).1892. *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: Edition of the Sanskrit Text*. Bombay and Leipzig.

Stein, M.A. (trans.). 1900. *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*. 2 vols. Westminster.

Sukthankar, V.S., S.K. Belvalkar, R.N. Dandekar, et al. (eds.). 1933–66. *The Mahābhārata for the First Time Critically Edited*. 19 vols. Pune/Poona.

Thapar, R. 1986. "Society and Historical Consciousness: The *Itihāsa-purāṇa* Tradition." In S. Bhattacharya and R. Thapar, *Situating Indian History*, 353–383. Delhi. Repr. in Thapar 1992: 137–73, Thapar 2000: 123–73, and in part I of Thapar 2002: 137–73.

Thapar, R. 1992. *Interpreting Early India*. Delhi. (Six papers republished in different places of Thapar 2000 and, in their original order and pagination, as part I of Thapar 2002: 1–181).

Thapar, R. 1996. *Time as a Metaphor of History: Early India*. Delhi. Repr. as part II (but with original pagination) of Thapar 2002: 3–53.

Thapar, R. 1998. "The First Millennium BC in Northern India." In Romila Thapar (ed.), *Recent Developments in Early Indian History*, 87–150. New Delhi.

Thapar, R. 2000. *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History*. New Delhi.

Thapar, R. 2002. *History and Beyond*. New Delhi. (This volume reprints and binds together four separate books with some of their original front matter, back matter, and pagination.)

Thomas, E.J. 1931. *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*. 2nd edn. London.

Tokunaga, M. 2009. "Vedic Exegesis and Epic Poetry: A Note on *atrāpy udāharanti*." In Petteri Koskikallio (ed.), *Parallels and Comparisons*, 21–30. Zagreb.

Vālmīki. 1984–. *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India*. Trans. R.P. Goldman, S.J. Sutherland Goldman, S.I. Pollock, et al. 6 vols. of 7 projected. Princeton.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1910. Bombay. Online version http://fiindolo.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/3_purana/visnup_u.htm [accessed July 2013].

Vogel, C. 1979. *Indian Lexicography*. Wiesbaden.

von Stietencron, H. 1995. "The Purāṇic Genealogies and the Date of the Buddha." *In Bechert* 1995: 221–49.

Witzel, M. 2005. "The Vedas and the Epics: Some Comparative Notes on Persons, Lineages, Geography, and Grammar." In P. Koskikallio (ed.), *Epics, Khilas, and Purāṇas: Continuities and Ruptures*, 21–80. Zagreb.

4

Historical Consciousness and Historical Traditions in Early North India

Romila Thapar

It might be useful to begin this chapter by offering a brief historical survey of the period that is under discussion in this paper (circa 1400 BCE – circa 1200 CE). It is subject to controversy over the periodization of Indian history. Earlier it used to be called the Ancient Period, but it has now been divided into two which are sometimes called the Early Historic and the Early Medieval (although neither label is really helpful). The first of these was preceded by the Protohistoric Period (circa 3000–1500 BCE) that is accessible only through archaeological data. It is called protohistoric as there is evidence of a writing system. Geographically it includes the northwestern and western parts of the subcontinent. Its most conspicuous feature is the city-based Indus civilization (sometimes called Harappan) that is not included here since it has not produced any long texts and its brief inscriptions on small seals remain undeciphered.

The Early Historic Period begins with events in the eastern part of the subcontinent, and prior to this the area has only prehistoric remains which, although contemporary with the Late Harappan, have so far shown no evidence of any meaningful contact. The Early Historic Period dates to the mid-first millennium BCE and continues to about the eighth century CE when the Early Medieval begins which in turn continues to about the thirteenth century. Subsequently, the establishment of the Turkish, Afghan, and Moghul rule marks the Medieval Period.

The Early Historic begins with the growth of the first cities in the Ganges plain. Texts that were earlier part of an oral tradition were now written down. This chapter uses the broader term Early India so as to include some of the oral traditions

prior to the texts of the Early Historic Period and possibly some texts that continue beyond the thirteenth century.

The early texts are the *Vedas*, originally transmitted orally but later in writing, and of these the *Ṛgveda* was the earliest, dating to circa 1400 BCE. The *Vedas* originated in a society of agro-pastoral clans that called themselves *aryas*, spoke an early Indo-Aryan language, settled in northwestern India, and gradually spread into the Ganges plain. The first urban developments occurred in the Indus plain and its vicinity, and in western India. A second wave of urbanization emerged in the mid-first millennium BCE in the eastern half of the Ganges plain but spread rapidly across the subcontinent wherever there was potential for the evolution of towns. This was a substantial change from the society described in the *Vedas*. Two epics – the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* – possibly originated at this time but their preserved versions include interpolations of a few centuries later, although these claim to refer back to the societies of earlier times. The epics are therefore dated to the period from the fourth century BCE to the fourth CE, although these dates are not universally observed.

The centuries leading up to the Christian era were also the period of the composition of Buddhist and Jaina texts that reflect current society and are different in texture and content. Representative examples are the Buddhist Canon composed in Pali. In the mid-first millennium CE, chronicles narrating the history of an important monastery in Sri Lanka provide a view not only of the history of Sri Lanka but also of northern India.

From the early centuries CE compilations were put together in a body of texts called the *Purāṇas*, literally "that which is old." Each text included the myths of a particular deity, rituals and beliefs, cosmologies and some historical genealogies, and dynastic lists. Around the same time, increasing numbers of inscriptions were created, beginning a little earlier, by the third century BCE during the reign of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (268–232). The major body of subsequent inscriptions dates to the dynasties of Kuṣāṇas, Kṣatrapas, and Guptas that ruled from the second century BCE to about the fifth century CE.

The period beginning in the sixth century CE witnessed a recognizable change that became more widespread after the eighth century. A multitude of somewhat smaller kingdoms now competed intensely with each other, with a hierarchy of intermediaries using control over land as the base of their power. This phenomenon has prompted a lively debate among modern historians on whether or not this system could be called "feudalism." Historical consciousness and historical writing that had earlier been embedded in other kinds of texts – ritual in nature, epics and such like – now expressed themselves in independent genres concerned with history. These were historical biographies of the rulers of the new kingdoms, such as the seventh-century biography of Harṣavardhana who ruled from Kanauj in the western Ganges plain, or of Rāmapāla who ruled in the east in the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Long inscriptions issued by virtually every dynasty, detailing royal events and reading rather like annals, became essential to various forms of legitimation. Regional chronicles recounted the history of kingdoms, big and

small; some of these were exceptional, such as the twelfth-century history of Kashmir, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. Such texts occurred in ever larger numbers and were obviously intended as histories.

While India experienced such major historical changes, the form in which the past was recorded and assessed must have changed as well. Not surprisingly, no single genre continued throughout the Early Period. But some did in fact span many centuries. We need therefore to consider the historical change with which they should be connected.

I now turn to my specific subject matter. One of the commonly held beliefs about Indian civilization is that it was characterized by an absence of historical writing and, implicitly, by lacking a sense of history.[1] With rare exceptions there has been little attempt to reexamine this generalization, and it is taken as axiomatic. I would like to suggest that, while in the early period of Indian history – up to the early second millennium CE – there would not have been historical writing conforming to modern conventions, texts did exist that reflect historical consciousness. Some of what was put together in the centuries BCE came to be reformulated as historical traditions in the centuries CE. From the mid-first millennium CE these traditions were reflected in distinctive forms that approximate historical writing. I shall restrict myself to texts from northern India, most of which are written in Sanskrit and some in Prakrit. The latter had regional variants and was akin to Sanskrit but was a more simple and widely used language. Sanskrit was initially the language of brahmanical ritual but became the language of the court and of learning.

Irrespective of the presence or absence of recognizable historical writing, an understanding of the way in which the past is perceived, recorded, and used affords insights into all early societies. It is worth investigating what was written and why, and what continued or changed. Historicity, ascertaining the actuality of a person or event, would be a complementary step.

Societies need to construct a past, or even many pasts, for these have social functions. Such narrations claim to represent what happened in the past sequentially and chronologically. This differentiates them from fiction and is a starting point, as it were, of historical consciousness. The perceived past contributes to the making of social identity although its construction, form, and content alter with new demands on power and legitimacy and can result in alternate readings (Hobsbawm 1972). Where the past is shared, it binds groups together.

One may well ask why it was necessary to argue that Indian civilization lacked a sense of history. Since priorities differ, historical traditions emanating from diverse cultures – Greek, Arab, or Chinese – are not identical in form. Traditions have to be searched for and examined in the context of their own history which helps us recognize and understand the form in which they are couched.

The search for indigenous histories of early India began in the late eighteenth century. European scholars were familiar with a particular type of historical literature as a distinct category recording the past. They looked in vain for recognizable histories in the Sanskrit tradition. Only one example, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa,

the twelfth-century chronicle of the history of Kashmir, was quoted as historical writing. Indian culture and particularly the Sanskrit articulation of what came to be called Hindu culture, was said to be ahistorical.

Macdonnell's searing remark (1900: 11), that "early India wrote no history because it never made any," was modified by others such as Rapson (1922: 57) who granted the making of history but regretted the absence of a systematic record. A further argument was that in India caste, viewed as civil society, overwhelmed the state – and therefore, without a state, there could be no history. For Hegel (1958: 140–1, 162–4), India was a land without recorded history.

British scholars of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were officers of the East India Company. Their informants were brāhmaṇas; so the texts central to religion such as the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* had priority, as did the codes on caste rules, the *Dharmaśātras*, which were projected as essential to social functioning. The texts of what were viewed as "heterodox sects" and other alternative ideologies were treated as second-order knowledge and initially not given much attention.

The interest in Sanskrit texts had attracted the curiosity of scholars in Europe as well. Nineteenth-century German romanticism believed that the discovery of Sanskrit texts would contribute to an Oriental renaissance similar to the discovery of Greek texts (Schwab 1984). Sanskrit was said to be the language from which all others had evolved, and Indian religion was enveloped in a cloud of mysticism. Inevitably some thinkers (such as Hegel) reacted against these notions.

The study of Sanskrit was used to offer proof of what came to be constructed as the Aryan languages spoken by "the Aryans." Inevitably, the theory of an Aryan race, although erroneous, was woven into the earliest constructions of Indian civilization. This, it was argued, was represented by the *Vedas*. Since these texts had little concern for history, the conclusion seemed logical that an absence of history characterized the entire civilization.

Other premises, deriving from British Utilitarian Philosophy of this period, underpinned the requirements of colonial policy, and that too in a changing relationship between the colonial power and the colony (Thapar 2000a). A denial of a sense of history was implicit in James Mill's description of "Oriental Despotism" which held that Indian society was static, registering no change, and therefore had no use for recording the past – one of the functions of the past being to legitimize the present (Mill 1968: I. 33–41). By legislating change, the British administration would break the stasis and introduce the notion of history. This was therefore in fact a new idiom for imperial control. In arguing that the colony's past had to be "discovered" by the imperial power, colonial policy could create an identity for its colonial subjects based on a history determined by colonial scholarship (below).

The absence of history had the practical advantage of allowing the formulation of a history for the colony that would support colonial policy. Colonial attitudes to knowledge pertaining to their colonies assumed that such knowledge was a form of control. Thus Sir William Jones wrote of the traditional texts being "in our power," and decades later Lord Curzon saw the intellectual discovery of the Orient as the necessary furniture of empire (quoted in Said 1978: 215). History was the portal

to the colony and to the control of the colony, since history as a shared past would enable the construction of the colonized Indian. Hence the history of every activity was investigated and even the awareness of the colony's past had to be provided by the colonial power.

This process was assisted by a virtual obsession with the Orient as being necessarily "the Other" of Europe. Statements on Otherness were foremost in the writings of Karl Marx (1859: 33–46) and Max Weber (1958). For Marx the static Oriental society was characteristic of the "Asiatic mode of production" that in his view entailed an emphatic denial of history (Krader 1975: 286–96). Weber derived a similar denial from his perception of the failure of economic rationalism.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the collection of manuscripts and artifacts for the reconstruction of Indian history continued apace. The decipherment of the *brāhmī* script used in the earliest inscriptions was impressive and revealed epigraphic data as major historical evidence. Archaeological excavation uncovered tangible history. Both kinds of data were essential to the reconstruction of early history quite apart from what was available in texts. Another category of data was provided by the oral compositions of the bards, gathered by James Tod (1960) and L.P. Tessitori (1914–1920). However, bardic compositions were not given the status of texts authored by brāhmaṇas. The bardic keepers of the tradition were alien to modern historians. The interpretation of early Indian history was still governed by European models, and the past of the non-European world was, literally and metaphorically, another country.

This absence of a historical tradition has recently been the subject of passing comments (Stein 1969; Kulke 1979), but the explanations are hardly convincing. Recent historical research has revealed changing nodal points in early Indian history which encourage the idea that there were some historical perspectives of the past even in earlier times. Others (for example, Narayan Rao et al. 2000; Deshpande 2007) have recently succeeded in locating historical writing in texts recorded in regional languages in the late second millennium CE but prior to colonial writing (i.e., up to and including the seventeenth century). These studies have questioned the notion of an absence of history but, with very few exceptions, such discussion has not gone back to cover earlier times.

That one can return to this question and consider it from a new perspective is largely because historical analysis in our times is understood somewhat differently than it was a couple of centuries ago. Today historiography has become pivotal, highlighting the historical context of texts. The questions asked are: Who writes history, and why? The notion that there could be societies without history has been questioned. At the same time, the unbroken perspective of the European past that begins with Greco-Roman writing – part fact, part fiction – and continues with the centrality of the Christian Church is being reexamined and its changing historiography is now apparent. The Christian view of the past was conditioned by concerns that were different from the Greco-Roman. The focus on Christ, on the Church, and on God's will would have been alien to the earlier historians. There was therefore a substantial change in historiography. The Enlightenment view of history was

instrumental in changing traditional perspectives. In the last half-century the Enlightenment view has been questioned in turn, and this has again altered the perspective. Historicity and the rigorous testing of evidence are of recent vintage, differentiating ancient from modern (and now also postmodern) historiography.

Furthermore, the shape and accounting of time have received attention in ascertaining the presence of a sense of history. Much has been made of the early Indian cyclical theory of the four *yugas* (ages or cycles of time) where repetition is said to annul a sense of history. Cosmological time here is represented in a large span extending from the creation to the termination of the universe. The span is divided into four ages. Moral decline is predictable as time runs its course. This is contrasted with the teleology implicit in the linear time of the Semitic tradition that is set in eschatology and thus supposedly conducive to historical thinking. Yet linear time in early Indian texts is evident in the recording of the earliest past through *vaṃśas*, that is, lineages and genealogies (Eliade 1959; Thapar 2000b). The term refers to the bamboo or cane plant with its distinctive form of node and stem that is so similar to the mapping of a descent group. The introduction of solar reckoning caused chronology to become more precise, as recorded in inscriptions, and prompted an extensive use of the concept of *saṃvat* (era) that entered historical calculations.

A sharp dichotomy between cyclic and linear time precludes the fact of the two intersecting on occasion. Cyclic time is preferably viewed as cosmological time whereas time measured in human terms is more linear and records generations and individual chronologies. Where the end of each of the four ages does not return to the beginning but deviates a little and initiates the next age, there cyclic time becomes a spiral as it appears to be in the pattern of the four ages. As such it can be stretched to take the form of a wave and even perhaps a not so straight line. It does not therefore involve a repetition of the past as has been maintained, since each cycle records change. The variations on time from Indian texts, where we find references to cycles and ages and, parallel to them, references to lengthy genealogies and descent groups, and also to the use of eras and chronologies for dynasties, point to the intersection of cyclic and linear time. The choice of variation would depend on the function that the measurement of time was performing. This is not unusual in societies of the ancient past.

Turning to what might be called the early Indian historical tradition, I would like to suggest that there were three differing historiographies. One consisted of the framework that was incorporated into texts referred to as the *Purāṇas* (literally, "that which is old"), as for example the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, composed largely in the first millennium CE. Each *Purāṇa* focused on the mythology, rituals, and worship of a particular deity in the Hindu pantheon, drawing on segments of earlier Vedic ritual texts and on the epics – the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* – as well as the mythology and rituals of local deities. Included in some *Purāṇas* was a large section with succession lists that in effect offered an overview of the past. This section is often referred to as *itihāsa* ("thus indeed it was") and *purāṇa* ("that which is old") and sometimes jointly as *itihāsa-purāṇa*. It became foundational to what was believed

to be the past especially when viewed from the late first millennium CE and onwards. (Incidentally, the term *itihāsa* is now used for history, but it does not carry the modern sense of the term.)

Another major historiographical tradition often labeled as Śramaṇic – Buddhist and Jaina in the main – drew on ideologies that were distant from the Purāṇic. This is evident from monastic chronicles such as the *Mahāvamsa* and from claims to biographies of the Buddha, such as the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa. Buddhist monks were called *śramaṇa*, that is, "those who labor," in this case to liberate themselves from the cycle of rebirth. The Buddhist and Jaina sects were dismissed by the *brāhmaṇas* as *nāstika* ("nonbelievers") and therefore heterodox, because they questioned the teaching of the brahmanical *Vedas* and doubted the existence of deity. The ideological substratum in their historical traditions is reflected in the choice and representation of events and personalities from the past that frequently differed from those of the *Purāṇas.*

To these two historiographical traditions we might add a third, the records of the bards (*sūtas*) but these, although referred to, were less visible. Their visibility is more apparent in an epic text such as the *Mahābhārata* (Witzel 2005). Oral traditions were formalized by the literati into texts and became part of the other two historiographies.

Historical consciousness was expressed in two ways that changed over time. In some texts it was embedded and subordinated to other functions. This changed later (after the mid-first millennium CE), with new textual genres that were more distinctly historical and reflected an externalized form of historical consciousness that stood in contrast to the earlier embedded form.

This shift is not incidental. It encapsulates two different historical situations and the processes that altered them. Embedded history appears to be representative of clan societies either prior to or during their mutation into societies where the mark of identity, in sharp divergence from the clan, was the caste. This was part of a larger process in the evolution of kingship and the establishment of states (Thapar 1992; Kulke 1995). Kingdoms (*rājyas*) were different from clan societies (*gaṇa-saṅghas, gaṇa-rājyas*). Kin connections became politically less relevant, and social hierarchies increased; so did differentiated access to resources. Early kingdoms then evolved into complex state systems, which required further claims to legitimacy through links to the past. These two stages of sociopolitical transformation seem to coincide to some degree with the distinctions between embedded and externalized forms of historical consciousness and traditions.

To illustrate the point I am making, the origins of the section in the *Purāṇas* that claim to be *itihāsa* (historical) go back to statements about clans whose narratives were embedded in religious texts. For example, the *dāna-stuti* hymns in the *Ṛgveda* eulogized contemporary rajas for giving generous gifts to the authors of those hymns that celebrated their successful raids. These are the earliest hymns. Located in a ritual text, the *dāna-stutis* gave the heroes greater credibility and a hint of immortality, and thus ensured the survival of the composition.[2] These hymns were recited on select occasions to a limited audience who understood Vedic Sanskrit and identified with the culture of the clan chiefs.

As is characteristic of epics, heroic acts were enlarged in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[3] Earlier raids and skirmishes pale before the formulaic description of a devastating battle. The *Mahābhārata* as *itihāsa* was used on occasion to introduce hitherto alien clans or unfamiliar customs (such as polyandry). The central narrative, however, remained focused on the confrontation between clans and the battle over kingship in the western Ganges plain between two sets of cousins. In a sense, Kṛṣṇa's comment at the end of the war, that the war was the termination of the *kṣatriya* clans, was a historical statement.[4] The war was a time-marker.

Embedded history seems to refer to clan societies, with kingdoms being on the anvil. The past was evoked nostalgically; persons and events provided the contours. Their historicity was not insisted upon but historical change was evident. Composed as oral traditions, the epics can now be recognized as repositories of at least a degree of historical consciousness, whereas a century ago societies without literacy were dismissed as being without history.[5] As part of an oral tradition they had a wide audience some of whom understood the language of the epics and were familiar with the events, while others probably had them explained to them. The epics, it would thus seem, were originally composed by bards focusing on heroes and clan conflicts. Because they were so popular it is likely that they were then taken over by the *brāhmaṇas* and given an ideological gloss, propagating the teaching of the Bhāgavata sect of the followers of Viṣṇu. This was mainly done by describing the protagonist in each epic as an *avatāra* (incarnation) of Viṣṇu.

Epic traditions were constructed to reflect a distinctive view of the past. For example, in the *vaṃśānucarita* (the section on the succession of lineages) of some *Purāṇas* (such as the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*) scattered material from earlier sources and believed to be historical was reformulated and located in a religious-sectarian text – the *Purāṇa* – but this time as a detachable section. The underlying patterns mapped different lineages of the past through genealogies, naming them Sūryavaṃśa (the Solar lineage) and Candravaṃśa (the Lunar lineage), each marking discrete social patterns and functions. This was essentially a historical representation but in a genealogical mode. Genealogy allowed an appeal to the past in the pursuit of power. Those of obscure origin seeking higher status could latch their ancestors onto established lineages through creating new genealogies with the help of *brāhmaṇa* authors who wrote the texts – which then became precedents, especially when social codes were being set aside.

The list of clan societies in the *vaṃśānucarita* section is followed by a sequence of dynasties and their rulers. Most of these, such as the Nandas, Mauryas, Śuṅgas, Āndhras, and Guptas, are historically attested. They date to the millennium from about the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE and represent a record of states as kingdoms. The preferred identity of the dynasties now was of *varṇa* (caste) rather than *vaṃśa* (lineage), with references to *śūdra* and *mleccha* kings – those of the fourth and lowest caste and those outside the pale of caste society. These were generally kings who had been patrons of the heterodox sects and therefore disapproved of by *brāhmaṇa* authors of the *Purāṇas*. A king of Magadha is associated with the creation of a new *kṣatriya* aristocracy. The implications

make this a major statement of social history.[6] Interestingly, connected with the coming of the dynasties is a switch to the future tense, another time-marker. The author begins the section on dynasties by saying, "Now I will declare the Bṛhadrathas of Magadha … those past, those existing and those who will exist." Chronology is now tied to regnal years and eras.

Historical consciousness is made apparent in other striking ways, for example, in the reuse of objects from the past that are considered historically valuable. The most dramatic example of such reuse is the Allahabad pillar, originally erected by the Mauryan emperor Aśoka in the third century BCE (Hultzsch 1992: xix–xx). It carries many inscriptions: the earliest are the pillar edicts of Aśoka, followed by the famous *praśasti* of the Gupta king Samudragupta of the fourth century CE, and later the genealogy of the seventeenth-century Mughal emperor Jahangir. The three are written in different languages and date to different millennia. Evidently a perception of the legitimacy that history provides prompted the deliberate choice to reuse the pillar, even though the reasons for eulogizing Samudragupta's military campaigns contradicted the ethics of nonviolence of the Aśokan edicts. One is reminded of Pierre Noira's comment (1989) that memory attaches itself to sites, history to events.

From the perspective of the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, the Gupta period of the mid-first millennium CE marks a watershed between embedded historical consciousness and the new forms of the post-Gupta historical traditions. The setting was now the court and not a ritual, and the players were often royalty and not the clan or ritual specialists. Some of these changes reflect elements of the parallel Śramaṇic historiography and a possible dialogue between the two traditions. Biographies, even if hagiographical, and chronicles were familiar from Buddhist writing, as exemplified in Aśvaghoṣa's biography of the Buddha, the *Buddhacarita* written around the third century CE, or the fifth-century Buddhist monastic chronicles from Sri Lanka.

The Śramaṇic tradition was predictably different, although differences narrowed later on. The narratives used the more widely spoken languages of Pali and Prakrit rather than Sanskrit (the language of Brahmanism). Initially relying on common sources, they soon followed different trajectories, sometimes contesting representations of *brāhmaṇa* authors. For example, Vimalasūri's *Paumacariyam*, of the early centuries CE, a Jaina version of the *rāma-kathā* (the story of the hero-deity Rāma), offers a feisty contradiction to then current versions, particularly in its refusal to demonize the clan society of Laṅkā, the enemies of Rāma.[7] Vimalasūri's insistence on the historicity of his narrative implies a political dialogue through such contradictions.

The choice of subject in later Jaina biographies and the *prabandhas* (chronicles) highlights patrons and reflects the parallel (or alternative) chronology of the Jaina Elders. The two outstanding authors were Hemacandra who in the twelfth century wrote a biography of the Caulukya/Solanki king of western India, Kumārapala, and the fourteenth-century Merutuṅga whose *Prabandha-cintāmaṇi* is a chronicle of the Caulukya dynasty of Gujarat from the tenth to the fourteenth century.[8] The style

resembles that of other biographies and chronicles except for a notable ideological stamp, and no attempt is made to modify the Jaina perspective. These texts often associate kings with Jaina teachers and thus maintain a parallel chronology.

The histories of the Mahāvihāra monastery in Sri Lanka, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa* of the mid-first millennium CE, begin with their versions of the earliest kingdoms in the Ganges plain.[9] For the early pre-Buddhist period they draw on narratives that are common to the Purāṇic versions as well, although variants are obvious and the Buddhist imprint can be recognized. The north Indian link continues to the late Mauryan period in the second century BCE, with the logical culmination in the Buddhist mission to the island. It was stated that the son of the Mauryan king Aśoka came to the island and converted it to Buddhism. Therefore the history of the rise of Buddhism up to the time of the Mauryas had to be narrated. Subsequently, south Indian kings are mentioned in the politics of Sri Lanka. Events and personalities are not represented in the same way as in the Purāṇic tradition. For example, the Mauryan emperor Aśoka is a mere name in the Purāṇic king-list, but here he is projected as a powerful ruler and the most important patron of the Buddhist Saṅgha.

These heterodox traditions, as they have been called, have a sharper understanding of the centrality of a historical perspective. The reasons can be manyfold: to mention just a few, the teaching originated with historical persons; literacy made it possible not only to copy the Canon but to write commentaries on existing works – and thus to introduce a historical dimension; monastic chronicles recorded sectarian activities and dissidence; monastic property and major donations needed to be documented. The relations between the *theras* (Elders of the monastery) and kings were narrated upon the assumption that both were historical figures, as indeed they often were. All this required a historical perspective. Chronology was calculated from a central date: the demise of Mahāvīra, the major exponent of Jaina teaching, and, among Buddhists, the *mahāparinirvāṇa*, the death of the Buddha. These dates are relatively consistent within each tradition, although their specific accuracy has been questioned. The heterodox religious sects propagated their views through public preaching; therefore, although the texts were written to enhance the learning of the monks, the narrative elements, usually accompanied by a moral, were intended for lay people.

Buddhist authors continued with what they regarded as historical writing as long as Buddhism was active. With its gradual decline in the second half of the first millennium CE, such writing tended to be confined to eastern India and Tibet where Buddhism continued to have patrons. The royal courts of this period even elsewhere recognized the importance of historical records. A number of *brāhmaṇas* attached to the courts as scribes and poets and others belonging to the castes of scribes began to create new genres of literature of which some were primarily historical.

Moving out of the chrysalis of an embedded form, and fostered by the inheritance of both historiographies, historical traditions emerged in genres such as *caritas* (biographies), *vaṃśāvalīs* (regional chronicles), and, on a more extensive scale,

royal inscriptions. Changes of forms, details provided on subject and author, and indicators of ideological perspectives signal the arrival of historical traditions; so does awareness of sources in varying degrees, of specificities of space and time, and of the significance of the past. The new genres reflect well-established complex state systems.

Post-Gupta kingdoms subsequent to the fifth century CE functioned within emerging structures in political economy, social hierarchies, and court diplomacy. Mechanisms of legitimacy and representations of state power drew on the past in ever more detail and more extensively than before.

The *caritas* (biographies) dealt with contemporary kings but included the historical antecedants of both subject and author. The audience consisted of the court circle and literati, and the compositions had an appropriate literary style. The central problem presented was often political although enveloped in literary forms.[10] The *Harṣacarita* is a seventh-century CE biography of King Harshavardhana of Kanauj by Bāṇabhaṭṭa a member of the court (Cowell and Thomas 1897; Kane 1918). It is seemingly concerned with what might have been seen as a usurpation of the throne by the king's younger brother, but its underlying theme is the acquisition by a relatively minor king of sovereignty over the realm of a larger power. It takes the form of a narration of events in which the king rescues his sister in distress. The name of the sister (Rājyaśri) suggests sovereignty but, more importantly, she is the widow of the erstwhile ruler of Kanauj, the seat of sovereignty over that region.

Another biography, the eleventh-century *Rāmacarita*, describes both the diplomacy and the prowess required by the Pāla king, Rāmapāla, to quell a revolt by his *sāmantas* (feudal lords) – a not unusual occurrence in those times (Majumdar et al. 1939). The purpose of the *caritas* was to give the official version that justified the king's actions; such justifications were important both to current polities and to later ones that drew on earlier precedents. Kings were occasionally said to be incarnations of deities but such incarnations did not direct events; they merely shored up the claims of the ruler.

From the third century BCE, inscriptions had provided historical information. Over the centuries, they increasingly became the annals of Indian history. Initially written in Prakrit, around the Christian era they gradually began to use Sanskrit. This change was intensified in new epigraphic forms. The eulogy of the king and his dynasty (*praśasti)* provided the opening benediction, followed by the origins and achievements of the dynasty and the reigning king. If the donor or the person ordering the inscription was not the king, but an officer – or a wealthy householder, merchant, or intermediary – his qualifications and ancestry needed to be established as well. The purpose of the inscription was stated next. If it was recording a donation, as many were, the details were specified as in a legal document. The inscription concluded with the names of the composer, the scribe, and the engraver, and with the precise date.

By the late first millennium CE, the increasing use of regional languages in administration is also reflected in inscriptions. The formulaic eulogistic sections

continued to be composed in the court language Sanskrit, but the details of the grant and the functions implicit in it were often written in the local language of the region. This doubtless facilitated the implementation of the grant by the local administration.

That earlier records were consulted by later administrators is also mentioned in some inscriptions, and such narratives become a narrative of history. This is evident in Rudradāman's inscription of 150 CE in Junagadh in western India. He refers to the building of a dam by the Mauryas and his repair of it. The fifth-century inscription of Skandagupta at the same site refers to an even later repair of the same dam.[11]

Where descriptions are exaggerated they need to be pared down but otherwise statements about the dynasty are reasonably historical. Thus the inscription at the site of Aihole dated to 634 CE introduces the Calukyas of Badami with an exaggerated metaphor but continues with an authentic list of the early kings.[12] Genealogies move from desirable links to actual descent. Even fabricated genealogies are of historiographical interest insofar as the reason for the fabrication needs to be explained. Some statements can be rhetorical but many are acceptable as historical narrative, set for the most part in the by now familiar chronology of eras. The Aihole inscription is dated both in the Kaliyuga (3735 years in the present age which is the fourth in the cycle of time) and in the Śaka era of 78 CE, giving a date of 556 (= 634 CE). It is surprising that such records have not been recognized as constituting historical traditions. The form of an inscription was in part conditioned by its purpose. Its location was frequently determined by places (such as temples) where people gathered. Where grants were made public they recorded royal patronage and the administrative arrangements required for the grant. Private grants were recorded on copper plates and remained with the family. Some inscriptions referred in some detail to the functioning of various institutions.

Of the *vaṃśāvalīs* (the regional chronicles) the finest example is undoubtedly the twelfth-century chronicle of the history of Kashmir, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* written by Kalhaṇa which was singled out two centuries ago as the only example of historical writing in early India (Stein 1900). Although as a historical text it is undoubtedly outstanding, there were certainly others that attempted to emulate the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* but generally fell somewhat short. *Vaṃśāvalīs* were accounts of the history of a region that mentioned scattered rulers and events but became more sequential with the establishment of the dominant dynasty. Where the record was maintained up to recent centuries by the court poet or chief priest of the ruler, the *vaṃśāvalī* continued into the period of the kingdom's decline. They were not composed in all kingdoms but where they did exist they helped define the processes of state-formation and the legitimation of the kingdom at various times.

The lesser known *vaṃśāvalī* of Chamba in the region of Himachal in the Himalayas offers an example of the chronicle format (Vogel 1911: 78–95; Thapar 2008). The early part consists of stories about various heroes that are taken from the early part of the *vaṃśānucarita*, the succession lists of the *Purāṇas*. Names are mentioned as ancestors and they follow the Purāṇic sequence although they are chosen at random. Then follows the first family of rulers who in the initial area of

control set up shrines which are still standing with their inscriptions. Next we find an overview of the rulers and events during the period when the kingdom of Chamba became important. Many grants of land resulted in the establishment of land-owning intermediaries, the extension of areas under agriculture, and increased revenue, and finally made the construction of royal temples and the maintenance of an administration possible. Some of this activity was attested in inscriptions, some of which were located at temples, particularly the royal temples that dominated the heart of the capital city. The chronicle goes on to record the decline of rulers, periods of subordination to Kashmir, and unsuccessful attempts to revive the power of the kingdom. As is the case with the inscriptions, the chronicle's language changes from reasonably good to poor Sanskrit, incorporating with increasing frequency terms of the local language (Chambayali).

Vaṃśāvalīs often coincided with the process of acculturation to what has been called Sanskritic culture and more recently discussed as the Sanskrit cosmopolis (Pollock 2006). This process was linked to that of spreading the culture of the courts in major kingdoms to those of lesser kingdoms on the periphery. Sanskrit as the court language was adopted in the latter areas, sometimes successfully and sometimes less. The language of the inscriptions tells us much about this. Castes are instituted as part of the process, and the social patterns of caste society are adopted by societies that were earlier organized as clans. Some elements of clan practice find their way into the customs of these castes. Origins tend to be linked to Purāṇic narrations of the lineages of the *kṣatriyas* – the aristocracy of the heroes – with whom genealogical links are fabricated, particularly by those of obscure origin. Changes in religion are reflected in the landscape: primitive shrines give way to small temples imitating the styles of temples in the major kingdoms, and ultimately the focus rests entirely on the royal temple. A scatter of village deities is amalgamated with those of greater status in the region. Ultimately those more intensely worshiped are identified with deities of the *Purāṇas*. This is usually the point at which the state, the dynasty, and royal power have coalesced and become firmly established. Subsequently the chronicles say much on persons and events, largely of the past, which can be read as reflecting a perspective on the history of the region (Witzel 1990). The chronicles tend to make some distinctions in describing the earlier society, prior to the establishment of the kingdom, and the changes this latter event causes in the region. Where the chronicle was maintained anonymously by the court poets or the royal priest as in the case of the Chamba chronicle, and over a long period, it had to be rewritten from time to time and this would have entailed changes and interpolations. So the record dates to when it was last edited.

A new and distinctive kind of historical consciousness emerged with these texts. There were some continuities from the embedded tradition. Traces of the eulogies of the raja in the *dāna-stuti* hymns of the *Ṛgveda* of circa 1000 BCE were forerunners of the *praśastis* in the inscriptions a millennium later. The focus on the epic protagonists provided elements that went into the making of the *carita*, the biographies of kings and occasionally of ministers. The *vaṃśāvalīs*, chronicling many centuries of the history of a region, borrowed heavily from the *vaṃśānucarita*, the succession

lists of the *Purāṇas*, especially for the early part of their historical reconstruction. Such continuities were necessary for those who were staking their status.

Court chroniclers, scribes, and authors speaking for institutions of authority continued these forms into later times and in other languages. When the writing of histories became more open as in the new genres of biographies, chronicles, and inscriptions, and when such writings were more commonly referred to in contexts concerning the past, those seeking the past depended on them as sources that provided the necessary data. Whether or not they were eventually accepted as authentic records, it was conceded that they referred to the past from a perspective that projected it as historical. Their authors at least believed them to be valid representations of the past. This in part, but only in part, explains why these became the sources for much of the reconstruction of Indian history over the first two millennia CE. The commentaries on these texts, written in the latter part of the second millennium CE, may suggest whether they were regarded as historical at that time.

It is possible now to take a fresh look at texts such as these because historians have been turning to themes which had earlier been precluded from history (LeGoff and Noira 1985). For example, in the Indian context inscriptions were only read for information on dynastic history and chronology. Subsequently, where they recorded grants they provided data on economic history. Now with the analysis of varieties of genealogies and patterns of social arrangements there is evidence on claims to political power and comparable activities. Historicity is undoubtedly important. But, in addition, new readings of the past can emerge from an analytical examination of these texts. Perceptions of the past were not confined to the activities of persons responsible for the making of events. The historical function of social codes and belief systems was as important, and these too were recorded.

These forms of historical writing continued as parallel traditions when much of the subcontinent came under the rule of Turkish, Afghan, and Mughal dynasties from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The chroniclers at these courts wrote histories of their patrons, their dynasties, and the territories over which they ruled. A few read the earlier chronicles and attempted to suggest a shared past, but most located their work in the context of Islamic historiography. Connections were sought between the dynasties ruling in India and those covered by Islamic historiography, but these were few and far between (Hardy 1960). That suggestions of a shared past with the earlier Indian tradition were not widely adopted was in part due to a difference of language. Earlier works were written in Sanskrit and various regional languages, whereas the Sultanate courts mostly used Turkish and Persian. Parallel texts, such as the *khyatas* (epic-chronicles) of the poets and bards of Rajasthan, were composed and written throughout the second millennium CE – the kind of records that interested Tod and Tessitori. But the Sultanate chroniclers doubtlessly considered them too local and too closely linked to the courts of those who had been subjected.

There was, however, one early exception. In the eleventh century CE, the central Asian scholar Al-Biruni was forced to spend time in northern India, where he was sent by the ruler of Ghazni, Mahmud. In his lengthy account of India, Al-Biruni complained that the Hindus did not pay much attention to the historical order of

things and were careless in narrating the succession of rulers (Sachau 1910: 1–14). Coming from this particular observer, this is quite surprising; it probably must be explained by the fact that his informants were largely *brāhmaṇas*. Had he used the scribes at the courts as his informants or read the chronicles, his view would have been different. He was interested in mathematics, investigated in some detail the calculation of eras and time periods in India, and knew about Indian patterns of chronology. Coming from central Asia, he was familiar with Buddhism and remarked on the presence of the *śramaṇas* in India. Again, if he had read some of their texts he would have recognized a historical tradition. Perhaps he overlooked these aspects because he saw no parallels with Islamic historiography.

When colonial scholars searched for earlier historical traditions, they consulted the seventeenth-century Mughal historian Firishtah who was familiar with them but who dismissed them as unreliable and fanciful accounts by non-Muslim authors. English renderings of Firishtah's texts were included by Alexander Dow in his *History of Hindostan* (1770–72, repr. 1973), which became a primer for those working in India. This in turn strengthened the colonial dismissal of early Indian history writing.

Distinctive cultures have distinctive ways of recording what is to them the significant past. I have attempted to trace the evolution and mutation of historical traditions in Purāṇic and Śramaṇic historiographies, from embedded traditions to independent reflections on the past and the present. Intrinsic to this is the evaluation of the historicity of persons and events, but history can also go further. I am suggesting not merely that we distance ourselves from the generalization that there was no historical writing in early India, but that we seek ways to discern awareness of historical pasts in early times. These will inevitably have to draw on critical inquiries into Sanskrit and other texts under discussion, but also need to reopen the question of what constitutes historiography. Such studies are likely to illuminate our understanding of early Indian societies from yet other diverse and insightful perspectives.

Notes

1   This is a shorter and revised version of Thapar 2012.
2   *Ṛgveda* 1.122.11: *rājāno amṛitasya* "kings of immortality." See Müller 1890–92.
3   For a critical ed. of the *Mahābhārata*, see Sukthankar et al. 1927ff.; of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, see Bhatt et al. 1960ff.
4   *Mahābhārata*, Śalyaparvan, 9.62.43: *sarvaṃ kṣatram kṣayam gatam* "all the kṣatriyas have been destroyed."
5   Vansina 1965, 1985; Henige 1974, 1982; Shah and Shroff 1959; Ziegler 1976; see also Fitzgerald 2010 and this vol.
6   Pargiter 1975 (text and translation, 13–55, 67–76): 2.52: *kṣatram anyat kariṣyati* "he will create another kṣatriya (caste)."
7   Text and translation in Jacobi 1914.
8   Text in Vaidya 1936; Jinavijaya 1933; trans. in Tawney 1894–1901.

9   *Dīpavaṃsa*: Cowell and Neil 1886; *Mahāvaṃsa*: Geiger 1908, repr. 1964.
10   As so ably analyzed by Pathak 1966.
11   Junagadh inscription of Rudradāman: *Epigraphia Indica* VIII: 43, line 8; Junagadh inscription of Skandagupta: J.F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III: 56 ff.
12   Aihole inscription: *Epigraphia Indica* VI: 4, v. 1, issued by Pulakeśin II in 634 ce and composed by Ravikīrti: *ciramparimeyaś cālukya kula vipula nidhir jayati* ("The immeasurably wide ocean of the Cālukya family has long been victorious").

References

Bhatt, V., D.R. Mankad, U.P. Shah, et al. (eds.). 1960–1975. *The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: Critical Edition.* 7 vols. Baroda.

Cowell, E.B., and R.A. Neil (eds.). 1886. *Dīpavaṃsa.* Cambridge.

Cowell, E.B., and F.W. Thomas (trans.). 1897. *The Harṣacarita of Bāna.* London. Repr. 1929.

Deshpande, P. 2007. *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700–1960.* Delhi.

Dow, A. (trans.). 1973. *Firishtah, The History of Hindostan.* 3 vols. 2nd edn. Delhi. Originally London 1770–72.

Eliade, M. 1959. *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return.* New York.

Fitzgerald, J.L. 2010. "No Contest between Memory and Invention: The Invention of the Pāṇḍava Heroes of the Mahābhārata." In D. Konstan and K.A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Epic and History*, 103–21. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Fleet, J.F. 1888. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III: *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings.* Calcutta. Repr. Delhi, 1970.

Geiger, W. (ed.). 1908. *Mahāvaṃsa.* London.

Geiger, W. 1964. *The Mahāvaṃsa.* London. Repr. of the 1908 edn.

Hardy, P. 1960. *Historians of Medieval India.* London.

Hegel, G.W.F. 1958. *The Philosophy of History.* Trans. C.J. Friedrich. New York.

Henige, D.P. 1974. *The Chronology of Oral Tradition.* Oxford.

Henige, D.P. 1982. *Oral Historiography.* London.

Hobsbawm, E.J. 1972. "The Social Function of the Past: Some Questions." *Past and Present* 55: 3–18.

Hultzsch, E. (ed.). 1992. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, I: *The Inscriptions of Asoka.* 2nd edn. Delhi. Repr. of 1969 edn.

Jacobi, H. (ed.).1914. *Paumacariyam of Vimalasuri.* 2 vols. Varanasi. Repr. 1962.

Jinavijaya, M. (ed.). 1933. *Prabandha-cintāmaṇi.* Santiniketan.

Kane, P.V. (ed.). 1918. *The Harṣacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa.* Poona. Repr. Delhi 1986.

Krader, L. 1975. *The Asiatic Mode of Production.* Assen.

Kulke, H. 1979. "Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbild im hinduistischen Mittelalter." *Saeculum* 30: 100–13.

Kulke, H. (ed.). 1995. *The State in India, 1000–1700.* Delhi.

LeGoff, J., and P. Noira (eds.). 1985. *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology.* Cambridge.

Macdonell, A.A. 1900. *A History of Sanskrit Literature.* London.

Majumdar, R.C., R.G. Basak, and N.G. Banerjee (eds.). 1939. *Ramacarita.* Rajashahi.

Marx, K. 1859. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. London. Repr. 1971.

Mill, J. 1968. *The History of British India*, I. New York. Repr. of 5th edn. 1858.

Müller, F.M. (ed.). 1890–92. *The Rig-Veda-Samhitā*. London.

Narayana Rao, V., D. Shulman, and S. Subrahmanyam. 2000. *Textures of Time*. Delhi.

Noira, P. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* 26: 7–24.

Pargiter, F.E. (ed., trans.). 1975. *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age, with Introduction and Notes*. Delhi. Repr. of 1913 edn.

Pathak, V.S. 1966. *Ancient Historians of India: A Study in Historical Biographies*. Bombay.

Pollock, S. 2006. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley.

Rapson, E.J. 1922. *The Cambridge History of India*, I. Cambridge.

Sachau, E.C. (trans.). 1910. *Alberuni's India (Tārīkh-al-Hind)*. 2 vols. London. Repr. 1964.

Said, E. 1978. *Orientalism*. London.

Schwab, R. 1984. *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*. Trans. G. Patterson-Black and V. Reinking. New York.

Shah, A.M., and R.G. Shroff. 1959. "The Vahivanca Barots of Gujerat: A Caste of Genealogists and Mythographers." In M.B. Singer (ed.), *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, 40–70. Chicago.

Stein, B. 1969. "Early Indian Historiography: A Conspiracy Hypothesis." *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 6.1: 41–60.

Stein, M.A. (ed., trans.). 1900. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. 2 vols. London.

Sukthankar, V.S., S.K. Belvalkar, R.N. Dandekar, et al. (eds.). 1933–66. *The Mahābhārata for the First Time Critically Edited*. 19 vols. Poona.

Tawney, C.H. (trans.). 1894–1901. *Merutuṅga, Prabandha-chintāmaṇi*. Calcutta.

Tessitori, L.P. 1914–1920. "A Scheme for the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, n.s. 10 (1914) 373–86; 15 (1919) 5–79; 16 (1920) 251–79.

Thapar, R. 1992. *From Lineage to State*. Delhi.

Thapar, R. 2000a. "Ideology and the Interpretation of Early Indian History." In Thapar, *Cultural Pasts*, 3–20. Delhi.

Thapar, R. 2000b. *Time as a Metaphor of History*. Delhi.

Thapar, R. 2008. "The Vamshavali from Chamba: Reflections of a Historical Tradition." In *India and Indology: The Professor Sukumari Bhattacharya Felicitation Volume*, 581–94. Kolkata.

Thapar, R. 2012. "Was there Historical Writing in Early India?." In C. Talbot (ed.), *Knowing India: Colonial and Modern Constructions of the Past. Essays in Honour of Thomas R. Trautmann*, 281–307. New Delhi.

Thapar, R. 2013. *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of North India*. Cambridge MA.

Tod, J. 1829–32. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajput States of India*. 2 vols. London. Repr. 1960.

Vaidya, P.L. (ed.). 1936. *Kumārapāla-charita*. Poona.

Vansina, J. 1965. *The Oral Tradition*. London.

Vansina, J. 1985. *Oral Tradition as History*. London.

Viṣṇu Purāṇa. 1864. *Calcutta*. Repr. Gorakhpur, 1990.

Vogel, J.Ph. 1911. *Antiquities of Chamba State*, vol. I. Calcutta.

Weber, M. 1958. *The Religion of India, the Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*. Trans. H.H. Gert. Glencoe, IL.

Wilson H.H. (trans.). 1864–70. *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa. A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*. Calcutta.

Witzel, M. 1990. "On Indian Historical Writing: The Case of the Vamsavalis." *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies* 2: 1–57.

Witzel, M. 2005. "The Vedas and the Epics: Some Comparative Notes on Persons, Lineages, Geography and Grammar." In P. Koskikallio (ed.), *Epics, Khilas and Purāṇas : Continuities and Ruptures*, 21–80. Zagreb.

Ziegler, N.P. 1976. "The Seventeenth-Century Chronicles of Marvara: A Study in the Evolution and Use of Oral Tradition in Western India." *History in Africa* 3: 127–53.

5

Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in Ancient Japan: The *Nihon shoki* as a Text of Transition

CHRISTIAN OBERLÄNDER

Introduction

The "classical" Japanese state of ancient times emerged during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries CE, when an archaic, holy great kingship at the top of an aristocracy divided into family clans – called "Yamato kingdom" – was transformed into a state governed by a bureaucratic administration that was organized according to Chinese models and headed by the Japanese emperor (*tennō*, "heavenly sovereign"; see, for example, Brown 1993; Piggott 1997; Ooms 2008). This process of consciously importing institutions from China, partly through Korea, coincided with Japan's entering the world of Asian civilizations. Already in the seventh century, there was a certain interest in the history of the emperor's rule because recording this history, on the one hand, contributed to proving the legitimacy of the Yamato court and, on the other hand, emphasized the equality of Japan with the cultures of China and Korea that were more advanced at the time. As the formation of the Japanese state progressed, it became important to create a shared awareness of what kind of state Japan was to be both in terms of time and space.

The two oldest extant works of Japanese history clearly illustrate this tendency. These are the *Kojiki* ("Record of ancient matters") completed in 712 and the *Nihon shoki* ("Chronicles of Japan") completed in 720; the latter was written in the Chinese language and included lengthy quotes from Chinese sources in order to demonstrate that Japan was on an equal footing with China. The *Nihon shoki* is a work of history starting with the origin of heaven and earth. Its account has partly

Table 5.1   The *Kojiki* and the Six National Histories

Title	Year completed	Period covered	
Kojiki	712	–628	Ends with reign of Empress Suiko
Nihon shoki	720	–697	Ends with reign of Empress Jitō
Shoku Nihongi	797	697–791	Nine reigns
Nihon Kōki	840	792–832	Four reigns
Shoku Nihon Kōki	869	832–850	Single reign of Emperor Ninmyō
Nihon Montoku Tennō Jitsuroku	879	850–858	Single reign of Emperor Montoku
Nihon Sandai Jitsuroku	901	858–887	Three reigns

Source: adapted from Brownlee 1991: XI–XIII.

the character of a mythical narrative, partly that of a chronicle of Japan with the emperor at its center. It differs from the *Kojiki* in that it dates all recorded events, from the time of the mythical first Emperor Jimmu to the end of the seventh century. This conveys to the reader an impression of precision and credibility that is only partially warranted. Until World War II, Japanese historians officially accepted the early dates provided by the *Nihon shoki* at face value; today only statements concerning the last hundred years of the period treated in the work are considered largely accurate. Moreover, since the gap between the end of its account and the work's completion is short (only twenty years), information on the last thirty years of its reporting is thought to be highly reliable (Brownlee 1991: xiv–xv). As we know from later Japanese chronicles, from the eighth to the tenth century the *Nihon shoki* – and not the *Kojiki* – attained supreme significance for the political system and the identity of Japan's rulers and elite. The format of these later chronicles followed the model established by the *Nihon shoki* and together with it formed the "Six National Histories" (*rikkokushi*) (see table 5.1). Deviations from the strict chronological order occurred only in biographical vignettes that were added to the dates of death of high-ranking officials, nobles, and monks.

The International Context of Writing History in Ancient Japan

As the Japanese historian Tarō Sakamoto has pointed out (1991: 34), the starting point of the compilation of the *Nihon shoki* was recorded as March 681. In the third month of that year, the Emperor Temmu (r. 673–686) gave orders to imperial princes to write down the content of the *Teiki* ("Imperial records") and *Kyūji* ("Ancient accounts"; see Aston 1972: II. 350). *Teiki* and *Kyūji* had been prepared

from materials that had been submitted by the powerful clans, temples, immigrants, and refugees from the Korean kingdom of Paekche, from the diaries of the envoys to China, and from current legal documents (Sakaue 2011: 118–19).

However, records of the court of the Empress Suiko (r. 592–628) show that the compilation of historical works was attempted even before that. According to the *Nihon shoki*, already in 620 the imperial Prince Umayado (later known as Shōtoku Taishi) and the minister Soga no Umako directed the work on records called *Tennōki* ("Record of the Emperors") and *Kokki* ("National records"; Aston 1972: II. 148). The fact that a member of the imperial family and a leading member of the aristocratic clans were involved in the preparation of these texts demonstrates that their compilation had official character already at this time. The drafting of the *Nihon shoki*, too, was led by high-ranking officials, for example Prince Kawashima at the time of the Emperor Temmu and Prince Toneri during the Yōrō period (717–724). The compilation process probably started with choosing texts from the genealogies and legends of the imperial family and the other powerful clans. That work on this history indeed began with selections from genealogies appears even more likely as the *Nihon shoki* is unique among all the six official histories in that it originally comprised a volume of ancestral charts, although this was later lost (Endō 2010: 2–3).

What prompted the court to draft historical works already during the reign of the Empress Suiko at the beginning of the seventh century? International developments seem to have been a major factor. For example, in the three states on the Korean peninsula (Koguryō, Paekche, and Silla) during the sixth century, the administration was strengthened and the production of written texts and historical works advanced greatly. It appears, then, that embassies sent to the court of China's Sui dynasty were instrumental in triggering the compilation of histories in the surrounding states. When tribute missions entered China, they were interviewed about the affairs of their country of origin. These interviews probably caused many of the tributary states to write down the "customs" of their countries and to organize them in a presentable form. For example, the *Nihon shoki* records that in 654 a Japanese delegation was interviewed at such an occasion "regarding the geography of the Land of Japan, and the names of the Gods of the beginning of the country" (Aston 1972: II. 246).

Japanese historians hypothesize therefore that questions like these, asked by Chinese officials, might have caused visitors to write down the history of their country, starting with the age of the gods (Ishimoda 1971; for Chinese historiography, see Durrant, this vol.). The thesis that various countries became conscious of their own history because of such outside impulses is likely to prove correct especially for East Asia where China had established a powerful tributary regime involving several surrounding countries (Endō 2010: 5). In Japan, this process of writing history probably started even before the interview of 654, since Ono no Imoko had been sent as an envoy to the Chinese Sui court as early as 607, during the reign of Empress Suiko. The international context became even more important in the seventh and eighth centuries because at this time Japan began to claim a more

prominent position within the traditionally China-centered system of international relations in Asia, even trying to establish itself as a neighbor of China that was entitled to parity. Although there is no proof that the *Nihon shoki* was actually presented to the Tang Court in China, it was likely intended as a work of history that Chinese people could read.

The Role of the Scribes

Who actually drafted Japan's first annals during the first half of the seventh century under the auspices of courtiers and officials? The compilation of earlier sources became possible when official scribes emerged who managed these records. On the islands of Japan, these scribes were called *fumihito* (or *fuhito*). They already served the leaders of Japan's early kingdoms and were responsible for writing and deciphering written records. These *fumihito* were mostly immigrants (*toraijin*) from the Chinese continent and the Korean peninsula. They were indispensable, since diplomatic affairs with the Chinese court were handled in the Chinese language and used the Chinese script. Indeed, a memorandum that a Japanese great king submitted to the Chinese court in 478 was composed in a refined form of written Chinese in which pairs of opposites were arranged according to the principles of Chinese classical writing. Only an immigrant from China or Korea would have been able to draft such a memorandum (Endō 2010: 5–6).

As early as the second half of the fifth century, immigrants experienced in written correspondence acted as scribes. Extant descriptions of official ranks suggest that in Japan a primitive civil service existed already then. The immigrant scribes were organized as a "rank of scribes" (*fumibe*) that apparently was a part of this civil service. However, in that period the scribes were still employed in positions that depended on their individual relationship to the great kings, and they played a role almost exclusively in diplomacy. It was only during the sixth century that scribes were incorporated into the civil service on a larger scale. At that time, the Emperor Kimmei (r. 539–571) offered assistance in the reconstruction of the Korean kingdom of Paekche, an ally of Japan on the Korean peninsula that had suffered from an invasion by the neighboring state of Silla. In return, Japan received many scribes from Paekche. It is important to note that *Teiki* and *Kyūji* were probably produced at this time when Silla, Japan's competitor on the Korean peninsula, began recording its own history. Since the scribes then active in Japan came from Paekche, Silla's adversary on the peninsula, they certainly influenced the content and materials chosen for compilation. In addition, "written history" appeared in the form of the two other predecessor texts of the *Nihon shoki* mentioned above, the *Tennōki* and the *Kokki*, at the court of the Empress Suiko early in the seventh century.

During the seventh century, the scribes were organized under the title (*kabane*) of *fumihito*. Considering that they secured for their descendants the right to attend the university, and that they were assigned diplomatic missions, they can hardly be regarded merely as subordinate civil servants. The scribes were "creolic"

officials of mixed ancestry whose prestigious position in Japanese society depended on their ability to mediate between various languages and cultures. They continued to be charged with writing Japan's annals of history well into the Heian period (794–1185). During this period, the Great Secretary (*geki*) of the Council of State (*dajōkan*), the supreme government official, always participated in the writing of the official chronicles, and this post was usually filled with *fumihito* descending from immigrants (Endō 2010: 6, 9, 20–21). Overall, then, at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century the rise of conditions that encouraged the compilation of history coincided with the appearance of scribes who handled historical records.

Rulers and Scribes: Creating History for Multiple Audiences

Based on the assumption that these early works of history were a reflection of the political mechanisms of the ancient Japanese state, Japanese historians have analyzed them by differentiating between the demands of the rulers and the preferences of those who were actually charged with preparing the annals. The Japanese great kings had an interest in using the practical abilities of the scribes in drafting diplomatic correspondence and keeping administrative records. For this purpose, they settled the immigrants in carefully chosen areas of their territory. The scribes, on the other hand, pursued their own interests. Some transmitted to the Japanese a specific cultural technique, such as the Chinese teaching of the five elements that govern the progress of all things on earth, and then returned to their country of origin. Many others, such as the *fumihito*, remained in Japan, reached a certain status by serving the great kings, and passed their positions along to later generations. They gained privileges, such as the right to send their descendants to the university, precisely because they were specialists from Paekche. Naturally, therefore, many of them acted as representatives of the strategic interests of Paekche at the Japanese court (Endō 2010: 7–8).

For example, besides keeping records for the rulers, the scribes during the seventh century produced several histories of the Korean kingdom of Paekche (Jap. *Kudara*). Among these, the *Kudara-ki* ("Records of Paekche") that documents the friendly relations between Paekche and Japan was probably drafted by scribes descending from immigrants from Paekche with the purpose of reminding the Japanese court of the origins of their service. A similar intention is visible in the *Kudara hongi* ("Original Records of Paekche"): again written by descendants of the scribes who had come to Japan from Paekche during the sixth century, this text commemorated the reconstruction of Paekche during that same time, and the way the Japanese great kings had contributed to it. It was probably under the influence of these scribes that parts of these accounts, in the form of quotations, were integrated into the *Nihon shoki*. The influence of these scribes is further evident in the fact that a peculiar way of counting years used in the *Kudara hongi* – based on the cycle of

Taisai (a fictitious planet supposedly moving like a mirror-image of Jupiter) that is not found in Chinese historiography – influenced the calendar used in the *Nihon shoki* (Endō 2010: 13, 17).

The complexity of the *Nihon shoki* as a text suggests that this chronicle underwent a multilayered process of compilation and composition before it was completed in its extant form. Based on phonetics and the rhymes of the poetry included in the work, different sections written by different authors have been distinguished. That indeed several authors were involved in drafting the *Nihon shoki* is also supported by differences in style and orthography. For example, in the entry about the Emperor Kimmei, the final text that is based on the Northern variant of the pronunciation of the Chinese characters during the Tang period does not fit the source material used for this section, the *Kudara hongi* prepared by immigrants from the Korean peninsula. Compiling and editing the source material and preparing the final text possibly were separate steps in the process of composition. It can be inferred that the final draft of the *Nihon shoki* was drawn up after much preparatory work. During the forty years of the work's compilation from 681 to 720, the preexisting sources (*Teiki*, *Kyūji*, the records of the history of Paekche, etc.) and the scribes, especially the so-called *fumihito* stemming from Paekche, exerted great influence on the content of the text. The *Nihon shoki* thus reflects the complexity of the compilation process as well as the particular social conditions in the early Japanese state that were characterized by the presence of a multitude of East Asian languages and cultures.

Notes in the *Nihon Shoki*

Besides the specific interests of the scribes, other influences and considerations visible in the *Nihon shoki* led to the inclusion of a great number of notes supplementing the main text of the chronicle. These notes, along with explanations about the age of the gods and the counting of years according to the *Taisai*-calendar, are unique features of the *Nihon shoki* within the group of the Six National Histories of Japan. Although some historians have suggested that the notes might have been added to the text only later, Japanese research today generally supposes that the notes were part of the *Nihon shoki* from the time of its completion in 720 (Endō 2009: 1).

The content of the notes is very diverse, ranging from simple explanations about the pronunciation of a word to quotes from sources and the reproduction of narratives that deviate from the content of the main text. If these notes indeed existed since the completion of the *Nihon shoki*, its text had a complicated structure from the beginning. This is particularly striking in the first two chapters that describe the age of the gods. The particular character of these chapters derives from the fact that, in addition to the main text, they record a great number of legends and traditions that are introduced with the phrase "one book says." Copies of the chapters about the age of the gods written during the first half of the Heian period insert these notes between two lines. This was probably the original form of the *Nihon*

shoki. They present the mythical events as if they were based on accounts in source materials, achieving this effect, for example, by offering different versions of the same mythical story and introducing these with the above-mentioned phrases like "one book says" and "another book says." To-date it is not clear how the main text and the "one book says"-insertions in the chapters on the age of the gods are related to each other. Those who believe that the legends are to be understood only in the context of the main narrative are opposed by others who observe that the accounts of the main text do not by themselves provide a consistent narrative (Endō 2009: 2).

That the main text and the notes are placed next to each other and have almost equal weight is a peculiarity of the *Nihon shoki*'s textual structure. The Japanese chronicles that were created later, such as the *Shoku Nihongi* (the sequel to the *Nihon shoki*), did not continue to use this structure. The *Nihon shoki* – a chronicle, we remember, that was written in the Chinese language – was modeled on the Chinese dynastic histories that were considered "canonical," as many direct quotes in the main text of the *Nihon shoki* demonstrate. For example, a work that is quoted especially frequently is the "Former Han History" (Ch. *Han shu*; Jap. *Kansho*). Classical Chinese histories were made accessible to a larger audience by supplementary notes that facilitated the understanding of the main text (see also below; on Chinese historiography, see Durrant, this vol., with bibliography). These notes eventually became so numerous and were so closely intertwined with the main text that both seemed to merge into an inseparable unit. It is likely therefore that all available copies of the *Kansho* contained detailed notes when the first official work of history was prepared in ancient Japan. Since in Japan the Chinese chronicles served as models for producing an authoritative historical document, it must have seemed only natural, in drafting a historical work, to include detailed notes from the beginning (Endō 2009: 2–3, 5).

The *Nihon shoki* differed from its Chinese models in having genealogies as one of its main themes. While canonical Chinese histories did not list genealogies, the *Nihon shoki* not only contains frequent notes about the founders of powerful clans but originally even comprised a separate book of genealogies (which has not survived). Hence, although in form and content the *Nihon shoki* imitated China's canonical histories and although it was composed according to contemporary international norms of Chinese writing, it carried the official name of Japan in its title and was still primarily a Japanese "national" history. With its particular genealogical interest, it also differed from Japan's other official works of history. This is not surprising since the genealogy of the emperor called *Teiki* was among the most important sources of the *Nihon shoki*. The origins of *Teiki* are to be found in the genealogy called *hitsugi* ("Succession of Emperors") that was read at the great kings' (and later the emperors') funerals (Endō 2009: 17; Sakamoto 1970: 43).

The historical records of ancient Japan, especially the group of official chronicles known as the Six National Histories, were composed as chronicles of the emperor. Especially the *Nihon shoki* describes the origins and rule of the imperial family, reaching back to the age of the gods. Previously, the early Japanese chronicles were

imagined to have been composed by rearranging parts of numerous already existing legends and integrating them into a single narrative according to a common theme: the origin of the rule of the emperor. In this process, various local traditions were thought to have been erased in order to create a unified history legitimizing the line of the imperial rulers.

In this way, the Japanese historian Atsushi Sekine (2007), for example, has tried to situate the compilation of the chronicles in the context of the foundation of the ancient Japanese state and emphasized the fact that during the eighth century the history of Japan was written in the form of *annals* of the Japanese emperor. Yet the book that best fits Sekine's explanations is not the *Nihon shoki* but the *Kojiki*. The latter was completed only a few years before the *Nihon shoki* and starts just like it with a description of the age of the gods. However, in contrast to the note-ridden chapters on the age of the gods in the *Nihon shoki*, the narrative in the corresponding articles of the *Kojiki* is straightforward. Hence those who talk generally about the Japanese founding myths usually mean the story preserved in the *Kojiki*. While the *Kojiki* also comprises notes on pronunciation and on the ancestors of aristocratic clans, these are kept within the limits of a commentary that is supplementary to the main text; they do not offer a variety of differing accounts that is comparable to that in the *Nihon shoki* (Endō 2009: 2–3).

Recently, exactly because divergent narratives are preserved in the *Nihon shoki*, the view that competing traditions could be changed or deleted at will has been challenged: in the early eighth century, even the editors of the official chronicle would not yet have possessed sufficient power to do so. The record of myths and the deeds of the emperors formed the basis of the *Nihon shoki* in order to facilitate a common understanding of history among courtiers and officials. However, taking into consideration the interests of many aristocrats at the court or in the periphery, the origins of their clans (at least the names of their founders) were also incorporated in the chronicle (Sakaue 2011: 118) – many of them in the form of notes supplementing alternative accounts. The use of annotation to preserve divergent accounts was not unique to the *Nihon shoki* but had a prominent model in the Chinese "History of the Three Kingdoms" (Ch. *Sanguo zhi*; Jap. *Sangokushi*) by Pei Songzhi (Endō 2009: 9, 15). The intention expressed in the *Nihon shoki* to provide an "inclusive history" open to the interests of prominent clans and courtiers will become even clearer when we consider the public readings of the *Nihon shoki*.

The Readings of the *Nihon Shoki*

As we know from later Japanese chronicles, from the eighth to the tenth century the *Nihon shoki* attained overwhelming significance for the political system and the identity of Japan's rulers and elite; its prominence was reflected in public readings (Jap. *kōsho*) of the work. Altogether, seven of these public readings are documented for the period between 721 and 965. The chronicles simply note the beginning and end of each reading and frequently add that upon closing a great banquet was

Table 5.2 Readings of *Nihon shoki*

Nr.	Start–End	Era	Empress/Emperor
1	721	Yōrō	Genshō
2	812–813?	Kōnin	Saga
3	843–844	Jōwa	Nimmyō
4	878–881	Gangyō	Yōzei
5	904–906	Enki	Daigo
6	936–943	Shōhyō	Shujaku
7	965–	Kōhō	Murakami

Source: adapted from Hasebe 2007: 28.

held at which poems were recited that were composed specifically for this occasion. Four extant so-called "private notes" (*shiki*) about these readings provide us with some more details. For example, the notes mention for the Gangyō readings of 878 to 881 the names of the highest-ranking participants from among Japanese officials. They report that all officials from the fifth court rank up to the crown prince participated in the ensuing banquet. Everyone from the sixth court rank up to the highest minister presented poems that were partially preserved in the "private notes." These readings were conducted under the guidance of leading scholars and lasted considerable time (from several months to several years). However, it was always the *Nihon shoki* – the "Chronicles of Japan" – and not any other work that was read (Sakamoto 1991: 76) (see table 5.2).

The Yōrō readings of the Nihon shoki

The first public readings of the text that the chronicles record for the year 721 (= Yōrō 5), the year immediately following the completion of the *Nihon shoki*, occurred significantly earlier than the others. Based on this early date and the fact that in the later *Shoku Nihongi* no entry mentions these readings, some scholars of Japanese literature and history have doubted that these so-called Yōrō readings really took place (Hasebe 2007: 27). However, there is no positive proof for the claims that it would have been unnatural if public readings had been scheduled in the year following the completion of the chronicles because this would have amounted to a "public display" of the new text. On the contrary, more indications support the view that the first readings of the *Nihon shoki* were indeed carried out in 721.

Sakamoto (1991: 79) concluded that the public readings were necessary because contemporaries still experienced difficulties comprehending texts written in Chinese characters. Since the so-called notes on the Yōrō readings (*Yōrō-setsu*) offer explanations on the entire period from the age of the gods to the reign of Empress Jitō (690–697), these first readings apparently covered all books of the *Nihon shoki*. This fact is of particular importance because readings that were held

at a public place were an important condition for providing the chronicles (that were drafted upon official order) with the authority necessary to distinguish them from other texts and traditions. Because the first readings of the *Nihon shoki* took place already in the year following its completion, it must have been compiled not only with the aim of submitting it privately to the Empress Genshō (r. 715–724) but early on with an awareness that a "written" history would be "read" in public and thus represent a public document (Endō 2009: 14–15).

When trying to understand the character of the *Nihon shoki* as "history to be read" before a public, it is particularly important to keep in mind the "imagined readers or listeners" that the editors were aiming at. Here the frequent notes in the *Nihon shoki* are illuminating. That they introduced many narratives that diverged from the main account apparently was acceptable to the work's "imagined readers" who must have comprised the entire group of courtiers and officials that had some ability to understand Chinese writing and texts, even if it was not necessary that all officials participated in the readings. When the *Nihon shoki* had undergone the formality of the public readings, it was recognized as official history. Hence to determine the time at which the *Nihon shoki* acquired its official character, the public readings of 721 are more important than the work's completion and submission to the empress in 720. Hence too this work, for which public readings had been planned from an early stage, cannot be viewed as one-sided, produced solely to reflect the intentions of the ruling family (Endō 2010: 20).

Its official character is even more apparent if we consider along with the public reading the members of the group of compilers that was headed by an imperial prince. Exactly because the *Nihon shoki* had this official character and was read to an influential audience, it would have been problematic to erase diverging regional traditions and to present only a unified, "correct" narrative. The different accounts preserved in the notes probably were legends that were imbued with a certain authority at the time of the *Nihon shoki*'s compilation.

The later readings

In the period between 812 and 965 six more official readings were held – at an interval of about thirty years – that addressed the highest members of the administration. These readings, too, should not be considered identical in content and purpose. It is difficult to imagine that a ritual was prescribed from the outset that would be followed in regular intervals of thirty years. On the contrary, the formalization of the readings seems to have been completed only during the Gangyō period in the second half of the ninth century. While the sources mention different government offices as locations of the earlier Kōnin and Jōwa readings, the Gangyō readings took place in a palace hall that remained the location for all later events. The festive banquet at the conclusion, too, with the recitation of poems composed for the occasion, occurred for the first time after the Gangyō readings (Hasebe 2007: 29).

To understand the original purpose of these readings, the second and third ones are thus of particular importance. Why was the *Nihon shoki* read in the years 812 and 843 to a distinguished audience? A closer investigation reveals that in both cases political upheavals that shook the very foundations of the emperor's court immediately preceded these readings. In the Kusuko incident of 810, two years before the Kōnin readings, the Emperor Saga (r. 809–823) successfully ended a power struggle with his elder brother, the former Emperor Heizei (r. 806–809), moved the center of power to the new capital Heian (present-day Kyoto), forced his defeated rival to enter a monastery, and replaced his son, the crown prince. There is no doubt that this confrontation between Saga and Heizei represented a deep crisis of imperial rule. Saga therefore took several steps to stabilize his grip on power, including the promotion of a specific view of history for which he used the reading of the *Nihon shoki* (Hasebe 2007: 29–30).

In 842, the year of the Jōwa readings, the death of the meanwhile retired Emperor Saga caused another political crisis leading to a succession dispute in the line of the imperial rulers. In light of the events of 810 and 842, we can interpret the readings of the *Nihon shoki* at these times as attempts to clarify or correct the perception of political conditions after major changes had caused open disputes about issues of imperial succession and the replacement of crown princes. The interval of roughly thirty years between consecutive readings was thus based on the fact that 31 years had passed between the Kōnin readings and the Jōwa readings. This interval was subsequently established as a fixed custom (Hasebe 2007: 30).

Nihon Shoki and *Kojiki*

Why was the *Nihon shoki* the sole subject of these readings and not, as one might imagine, for example the older *Kojiki* – the "Records of Ancient Matters"? The *Kojiki* had been produced by the court official Ō Yasumaro in 712 and is thus the oldest surviving Japanese book. Ō had been ordered by the Empress Gemmei (r. 707–715) to write down those texts that the court bard Are Hieda had memorized during the preceding decades. It contains an early version of foundational myths describing the creation of the world to which the origins of the ruling house of Japan were closely linked. In contrast to the *Nihon shoki*, the slightly older *Kojiki* offered a more stringent narrative with fewer divergent accounts because its readership, as Eiichi Mitani (1980) has pointed out, probably comprised only the small circle of the imperial court and the priests. This fits also with the more recent hypothesis that the completion of the *Kojiki* was hastened by Empress Gemmei because it was needed as educational material for Prince Obito's preparation for succession (Emperor Shōmu, r. 724–749; Aoki 2003, ref. according to Sakaue 2011: 118).

While both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* deal with the "mythical age," they differ in the cosmology on which their descriptions are based. The *Kojiki* reflects a cosmology centered on the so-called *musubi*, a force of creation. Coming from the

heavenly land of Takaamagahara (the origin of which is not explained any further), this force creates a sequence of gods who in turn fashion the land on earth as well as its inhabitants, and whose descendant finally is chosen to become ruler of this world (Kōnoshi 1999: 94–95, 107). By contrast, the *Nihon shoki* takes full account of Chinese beliefs, explains the creation of the world through the interaction of the forces of Yin and Yang, and thus anchors the mythical story in the context of Chinese world history – which is confirmed by the fact that the corresponding passages consist to a considerable degree of quotes from Chinese texts (Kōnoshi 1999: 116, 120, 133). This insight is of central importance for understanding Japan's early chronicles: they are *not* an account of some common Japanese "original myth," based on some original source, for which they have often been mistaken. Instead, the accounts in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* need to be understood more correctly as "multiple myths" that are independent of each other and were created with differing emphasis, aiming separately at legitimizing the position of the imperial house vis-à-vis different imagined audiences.

This conclusion is supported by the way in which the two works differ in treating the early Japanese state's international relations. The *Kojiki* does not mention China at all and thus avoids treating the more recent past that would have necessitated addressing relations with China. It only describes how the emperor of Japan established his rule on the Korean peninsula. The *Nihon shoki*, on the other hand, mentions relations with China but portrays Japan as a great power that rules the Korean peninsula and is not subordinate to China but forms its own political cosmos (Kōnoshi 1999: 158–61).

Unbroken continuity

In spite of the wish to draw equal with China, even the Japanese authors of the *Nihon shoki* could not follow the Chinese in one important point. The Chinese works of history were characterized by the idea of the so-called "heavenly mandate." According to this concept, a ruler could lose the mandate of heaven which would prompt his downfall and the end of his dynasty. By contrast, Japanese histories expressly aimed at confirming the sacred character and unbroken continuity of Japan's imperial line of descent. The Japanese chronicles and their later supplements and interpretations tried to strengthen the position of the currently ruling emperor by attaching him to a long line of sacred predecessors that extended without any break to the first divine ancestors of the imperial house. For this purpose, the authors of the early chronicles used already existing mythical accounts and historical evidence to create a continuous genealogical narrative (Brown 1993: 505–6).

We now understand why after struggles between competing lines of succession within the imperial house, as they happened in 810 and 842, Japanese rulers ordered the public reading of only and precisely the *Nihon shoki*. This work was *the* authoritative account covering ancient and recent events and also clarifying Japan's identity vis-à-vis outside powers. Readings of the *Nihon shoki* held immediately

after the settlement of a power struggle revived the memory of the mythical origin of the ruling dynasty and in an ideologically and psychologically important way integrated the new emperor into the "unbroken line of rulers." On the other hand, the line of succession that was defeated in a power struggle was cut off from the "unbroken line" (Hasebe 2007: 31).

Less dramatic problems could also be resolved, at least temporarily, through readings of the *Nihon shoki*. For example, reports about disagreements among leading clans concerning the distribution of responsibility and rank at the imperial court illustrate that during the ninth and tenth centuries the *Nihon shoki* was *the* authoritative source consulted for decisions to settle such conflicts. This was possible because, like a so-called peerage book, it listed in great detail the rank and position of the nobility. It is not surprising, therefore, that quite soon a voluminous body of secondary literature was produced that was largely guided by special interests. For example, the text *Kogoshui* of Imbe Hironari from the year 807 pretended to correct alleged mistakes and omissions in the tradition of the *Nihon shoki*, while it was really meant to offer historical support to the claims of the Imbe clan against the more powerful house of the Nakatomi (Kōnoshi 1999: 164–65).

The ritualization of the readings that started in the Gangyō period permits the conclusion that the tensions that had provided the background against which the earlier two readings had taken place were no longer as dramatic in later years (Hasebe 2007: 32). Even so, the readings continued to have some effect. Together with the above-mentioned secondary literature, they offered important opportunities for reinterpretations of the *Nihon shoki*. These were based on the assumption that there had been only one *single* original myth of Japan. Attempts were thus made to unify the different myths contained in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. For example, the first part of the *Nihon shoki* that explained the cosmology and was pieced together from many Chinese sources, was now reduced to the status of a "preface" and separated from the main body of the text. This cleared the way to interpret the narrative of the *Nihon shoki* along the lines of the *Kojiki* (Kōnoshi 1999: 176, 184–85). By negating Chinese influences and creating the fiction of a single Japanese founding myth, the readings followed the general cultural trend of the ninth and tenth centuries. The imitation of the culture of the Chinese Tang dynasty during the Nara period in the eighth century was thus followed during the Heian period of the ninth and tenth centuries by a reappraisal of the history and traditions of Japan. With the decline of the power of the imperial court in the eleventh century, the readings of the *Nihon shoki* ended altogether. It continued to be studied in the Middle Ages and remained influential, but the *Kojiki* steadily gained importance for purposes of ideology.

Political and Official Function

The special political importance of the *Nihon shoki* can also be gleaned from the fact that it was not a subject of instruction at the university (*daigaku*), the highest institution of education in the ancient Japanese capital that reached its heyday during

the ninth and tenth centuries. This university offered lectures in the field of "history and literature" as one of four courses of specialization. Interestingly enough, in this field of study the textbooks used were the so-called "Three Histories" (Ch. *San shi*, Jap. *Sanshi*) – Sima Qian's "Records of the Historian" (Ch. *Shi zhi*, Jap. *shiki*), and the above-mentioned "Former" and the "Later Han Histories" (Ch. *Hou Han shu*, Jap. *Gokansho*). These are all works about Chinese history. Thus while official works of Japanese history, like the *Nihon shoki* and its sequel, the *Shoku Nihongi*, were available, history specialists at the university studied history exclusively from books of the most advanced country, China. Apparently it was the aim of the university to provide knowledge of the methods of historiography through Chinese models that may have been roughly equivalent to world history at the time. Until the decline of the university in the twelfth century, neither the *Nihon shoki* nor the *Shoku Nihongi* were used as textbooks of history (Momohiro 1994). Clearly, they were considered political, not academic texts.

By the ninth century, the *Kojiki* and especially the *Nihon shoki* had firmly established imperial rule as the only imaginable form of government. The authors of the five "National Histories," which were compiled later, regarded their work as an important official function. It was conducted under the supervision of a government office especially established for this purpose and staffed with top officials. For this work, voluminous sources were made available: the diary of the Great Secretary of the Council of State (*geki nikki*), chronicles of the imperial court (*naiki nikki*), documents produced by the different government offices, genealogies and histories of the influential clans, diaries of individual officials and numerous other texts (Sekine 2007: 2–4). Around the middle of the tenth century, the imperial government prepared the draft of a seventh official history titled "New National History" (*Shinkokushi*). However, this text never received its final form, and the manuscript was later lost. The reasons of this failure are not known but it coincides with a significant loss in imperial power and the discontinuation of the recording of history by the imperial Japanese government.

The Development of Nonofficial and Literary Genres

After the decline of imperial power, a variety of unofficial works of history were produced. They can be divided into three categories: (1) works roughly continuing the tradition of the "National Histories," (2) historical narratives adopting a literary style, and (3) military chronicles. I will briefly discuss here only the first two types. For the first group of texts, court nobles, writing in classical Chinese and using as sources the *Shinkokushi* and court records, compiled, for example, the *Nihon kiryaku* ("Outline Record of Japan") and the *Honchū seiki* ("Chronicle of Imperial Reigns"). Both works started where the official histories ended, and continued them to the middle of the twelfth century. Similar in format and style but written for other purposes was the *Fusō ryakki* ("Brief History of Japan") of the scholar monk Kōen from the monastery on Mount Hiei. This work begins

with the mythical first Emperor Jimmu and outlines developments to the end of the eleventh century. Yet in addition to the usual sources Kōen also studied temple records, biographies of monks, and Buddhist narratives. Although imitating the official histories in many respects, the *Fusō ryakki* thus became a history of Japanese Buddhism.

The second type of nonofficial historiography written by private individuals is characterized by being based on historical facts but adopting a narrative style. This combination signals a fundamental change in the concept of historiography. Authors of such works describe the psychology and motives of historical actors and create a much fresher and livelier image of Japanese society than the earlier chronological types of historical writing did. A most highly esteemed work of this category is the *Ōkagami* ("The Great Mirror") that treats the years from 850 to 1025. This period witnessed the peak of the political influence of the Fujiwara family that gradually took over government leadership from the emperors. The *Ōkagami* takes the form of a dialogue between two old men who are at least 150 years old and on a pilgrimage to a temple. Their advanced age allows them to describe history as if they had experienced the events themselves. Sometimes their conversation is interrupted by a fellow traveler asking critical questions. The device of the dialogue allows the inclusion of more than one perspective and produces an impression of objectivity.

The *Ōkagami* glorifies and idealizes the Fujiwara and their power, avoiding any direct criticism of them, but its author indirectly depicts the decline of the imperial house, seems to view the period of direct rule by the emperor before the rise of the Fujiwara as a kind of golden age, and carefully emphasizes the emperor's righteousness and superiority. This perspective also has a Buddhist dimension because the belief was widely held at the time that the world was entering a cycle of deterioration. In this context, the Fujiwara family's fame seemed a meaningless, transient occurrence in the stream of history: merely one more profane phenomenon in a world that had forgotten the real meaning of human life. The *Ōkagami* was followed by similar works addressing partly earlier, partly later periods.

Summary and Conclusion

The two earliest Japanese works of history, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, demonstrate the particular significance that the commemoration and interpretation of the past had for the stabilization of the imperial dynasty and also for decisions about rank and role of the nobility. They originated less in a genuine interest in history than in a "broader and more concrete interest in legitimacy, justification, reconciliation, change etc., and [this interest] is part of that functional frame that we denote with the terms memory, tradition and identity" (Assmann 2007: 67). On the one hand, myths described in these texts explained the creation and development of the world; on the other hand, detailed records of the recent

past legitimized the existing political and social order. The first aspect is clearly expressed in the *Kojiki* that addresses an elite Japanese audience. The second aspect is more prominent in the *Nihon shoki* that, in addition, aims at defining Japan's identity vis-à-vis China.

The compilation of the *Nihon shoki* that was initiated at the court of the Emperor Temmu was as important to the Japanese state as the drafting of the *Ritsuryō* legal code that was promulgated in 701 and represented such a crucial reform that Japanese historians call the system of government established at that time, the "*Ritsuryō* system." The significance of the *Nihon shoki* is also reflected in the prominence of the compilation team and the ritual of the Yōrō readings. There is no doubt that the *Nihon shoki* was intended to make a historical statement that corresponded to contemporary views of history and current political needs, that is, to describe the origin of the rule of the emperor and to prove the legitimacy of the Emperor Temmu's line. But to understand the complexity of this work as it was completed in the eighth century, we need to overcome the conception of the *Nihon shoki* as a unified national history.

The *Nihon shoki* was written on the orders of the emperor but its content did not reflect exclusively the perspective of the ruling house. While it could draw on the authority of the emperor, its content had to accommodate numerous influential interests and in that respect needed to be acceptable to its different audiences – especially since after its completion it was laid open in the form of public readings. In this context, the often high-ranking scribes who actually wrote down the *Nihon shoki* succeeded to a considerable degree in inserting into the text historical statements that served their own interests. In addition, apparently to improve acceptance among the elite, the authors of the *Nihon shoki* refrained from completely unifying the historical narrative in favor of the ruling family, and used numerous notes to preserve diverging traditions.

Here the limits of official historiography become visible. In spite of its official character, the *Nihon shoki* was not all-powerful: the historical "reality" it depicted could not easily be falsified. The complicated structure of its text is the result of the fact that even official historiography cannot escape the influence exerted by the political conditions of a particular period. Taking such influences into account, the notes in the *Nihon shoki* recorded diverging traditions and expanded the main text, but they also inserted multiple meanings into the narrative. Hence these notes can be understood as a method of "accommodating historiography." In this respect, the first compilation of a Japanese "national history" established a "soft" type of historiography that included a certain number of accounts which were not fully congruent with the official line (Endō 2009: 19). Even so, the *Nihon shoki* subsequently exerted great normative power because in court circles it was unthinkable to ignore an official history that had not just been written down but even explained in public readings. The *Nihon shoki* thus represents an important step towards establishing a unified "protonational" view of Japanese history that contributed externally to the demarcation against neighboring countries and internally to the creation of a shared identity.

At the same time, the *Nihon shoki* reflects a political transition, including a gradual power shift from the dominating clans of the aristocracy to the ruling imperial family. This transition was still in process when the work was compiled so that the traditions of the influential clans were at least partially integrated into the text. While the *Nihon shoki* itself was influenced by this transition, it was also an instrument in addressing it. Through its public readings, this work of transition was transformed into a "classic" from which it was very difficult to deviate in future accounts of history. The authoritative list of emperors included in the *Nihon shoki* and the genealogies of the powerful clans were not intended to encourage but, on the contrary, to preempt "active historiography." The *Nihon shoki* and the subsequent "national histories" developed into instruments of control and, as such, were updated regularly.

Only with the decline of imperial rule from the eleventh century, the *Nihon shoki* began to lose its predominant role, but by then all historical records in Japan had derived their significance from their position vis-à-vis the *Nihon shoki* – interpreting it, learning from it, or imitating it. It was only unofficial forms of historiography, developing after the decline of imperial power, that permitted critical perspectives and were not primarily driven by an interest in legitimating imperial rule. Ironically, though, in such somewhat "critical" literature for the first time the idea emerged that there had been a "classical age," the period of direct rule by the emperors, that had passed and was now idealized.

References

Aoki, K. 2003. *Hakuhō, Tenpyō no jidai [The Periods Hakuhō and Tenpyō]*. Tokyo.

Assmann, J. 2007. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in den frühen Hochkulturen* [*Cultural Memory. Writing, Remembering, and Political Identity in Early Civilizations*]. 4th edn. Munich.

Aston, W.G. (trans.). 1972. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*. 2 vols. in 1. Tokyo.

Brown, D. (ed.). 1993. *The Cambridge History of Japan*, I: *Ancient Japan*. Cambridge.

Brownlee, J.S. 1991. "Translator's Introduction". In Sakamoto 1991: xi–xxviii.

Endō, K. 2009. "*Nihon shoki* no bunchū – denshō no fukusūsei kara" ("Original Notes of the *Nihon shoki* – Examination of Plural Legends"). *Hisutoria [History]* 214: 1–23.

Endō, K. 2010. "Kodai kokka to shisho no seiritsu – Higashi Ajia to 'Nihon shoki'" ("Ancient State and the Making of the Official History"). *Nihonshi kenkyū (Journal of Japanese History)* 571: 1–24.

Hasebe, M. 2007. "'Shoku-Nihongi' seiritsu ikō no 'Nihon shoki'" ("The Meaning of *Nihon shoki* after the Compilation of *Shoku nihongi*"). *Rekishigaku kenkyū (Journal of Historical Studies)* 826: 27–32, 39.

Ishimoda, S. 1971. *Nihon no kodai kokka [The Ancient State of Japan]*. Tokyo.

Kōnoshi, T. 1999. *Kojiki to Nihon shoki [Kojiki and Nihon shoki]*. Tokyo.

Mitani, E. 1980. *Kojiki seiritsu no kenkyū [Research into the Creation of the Kojiki]*. Tokyo.

Momohiro, Y. 1994. *Momohiro Yuki chōsakushū 1 shuseiban jōdai gakusei no kenkyū [Collected Works of Momohiro Yuki*, I: *Corrected Edition. Research into the Ancient Education System*]. Tokyo.

Ooms, H. 2008. *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Temmu Dynasty, 650–800.* Honolulu.

Piggott, J.R. 1997. *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship.* Stanford.

Sakamoto, T. 1991. *The Six National Histories of Japan.* Trans. J.S. Brownlee. Tokyo.

Sakaue, Y. 2011. *Heiseikyō no jidai [The Age of the Capital Heisei].* Tokyo.

Sekine, A. 2007. "Kokushi hensan no shiryō to sagyō" ("Materials and Authorship in the Compilation of Japanese Chronicles"). *Rekishigaku kenkyū (Journal of Historical Studies)* 826: 2–9.

As the *Dharmacakra* Turns: Buddhist and Jain Macrohistorical Narratives of the Past, Present, and Future

Jason Neelis

Introduction: Didactic Purposes and Institutional Value of Macrohistorical Narratives

Buddhist and Jain rebirth narratives demonstrate how the past plays an enduring role in the life of the present by delineating mutual relationships between actions in past, present, and future times.[1] Literary and visual sources in both heterodox traditions evince concerns with historicizing stories of previous births, which were configured and constantly reconfigured according to changing models of reality and time.[2] Buddhist and Jain scholastic schemes categorize time in periods of cyclical ages (*kalpa*s) instead of delineating a linear progression of history from a first cause.[3] Within these cyclical periods, Jain "conquerors" (Jinas) and "Buddhas of the Past" who turn the "Wheel of Dharma" (*Dharmacakra*) rediscover, realize, and teach the Dharma, a multivalent term which in this context basically refers to Buddhist and Jain teachings, doctrinal truths, and ethical guidelines, although technical uses differ considerably across South Asian traditions.[4] Jain and Buddhist "universal histories" with formulaic hagiographies may seem ahistorical, since the "timeless realities" (Nattier 1991: 141) perceived by Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Jina, and Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, are not viewed as particular to their own intellectual and religious contexts in northern India during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.[5]

However, time and place were and still are fundamental to understanding religious narratives, since these life histories take place in specific temporal and

geographical contexts. Rather than situating events surrounding the birth, awakening, and turning of the *Dharmacakra* in time immemorial or beyond the knowable world, Jain and Buddhist traditions emphasize that the Buddhas' and Jinas' "experience is by definition repeatable and is accessible (at least in theory) to all living beings" (Nattier 1991: 8). Acknowledgment of human agency and historical contingency explains why stories of past actions are important in these macrohistorical narratives. As Jan Nattier has remarked, a Buddhist view that "human actions are significant and have a notable impact upon our world" (Nattier 1991: 139) is not difficult to reconcile with a maximalist concept of history, but a more restrictive definition of history as "the disinterested recording of events" (140) is hardly represented as a category in Buddhist historiography (or in South Asia generally). Thus, the narratives discussed in this chapter are not mere objective chronicles of prior events, but show the central rather than peripheral significance of interpreting the history of past actions for understanding present realities. Representations of the lives of Buddhas and Jinas in literature and art invariably incorporate and reflect present concerns, motifs, and stereotypes. Just as reading between the lines of narratives about an idealized past can aid in discerning the periods, regions, and cultures through which the stories have been transmitted, eschatological narratives in the form of *ex eventu* prophecies predicting the decline and disappearance of the "True *Dharma*" (*saddharma*) often refer to social, political, and military dynamics at the time of their composition.

Narratives about relationships between the past, present, and future have shaped Jain and Buddhist religious identities and contributed to the expansion of the monastic community (*Sangha*). Despite different Jain and Buddhist doctrines of causality, both traditions employ stories to delineate correct and incorrect paths followed by exemplary actors in previous births. Many didactic narratives highlighting the benefits of generosity (*dāna*) and negative repercussions of stinginess (*mātsarya*) provide rationale for donations by male and female patrons on whom monastic communities are supposed to rely for material support. Stories of past actions (and consequences in present and future rebirths) not only incentivize meritorious behavior by lay devotees, but also justify monastic rules, rituals, doctrines, and claims to antiquity by competing lineages. Historical memory of the life stories of Śākyamuni and Mahāvīra expanded to encompass changing intellectual, social, and economic environments as well as locations outside of earlier heartlands in the ancient Indian kingdoms of Magadha and Kosala. Buddhists and Jains established corporeal links to the presence of Buddhas and Jinas whose physical remains were worshiped at stupa shrines, pilgrimage places, and images in temples. Interpretations of the macrohistorical past in flexible Buddhist and Jain narratives are instrumental in stimulating religious practices of donation and devotion, illustrating guidelines for normative behavior, and contributing to institutional expansion within and outside of South Asia.

Table 6.1 Chronological Overview of Religious and Political Figures

Sixth century BCE	Mahāvīra, 24th Jina
Fifth century BCE	Śākyamuni, historical Buddha (deceased circa 400 BCE)
circa 270–232 BCE	Reign of Aśoka, Maurya emperor
circa 150 BCE	Reign of Menander, Indo-Greek ruler in Punjab
Late first century BCE	Kharavela ruling in Kalinga
First century BCE/first century CE	Śaka rulers in northwest Mahākṣatrapa Jihonika Stratega Aśpavarman
Second century CE	Kuṣāṇa empire Kaniṣka Huviṣka
Late fifth/early sixth centuries CE	Alchon Huns Toramāṇa Mihirakula

Genres of Buddhist and Jain History

This chapter aims to expand upon the historical perspectives of *śramaṇa* religious traditions introduced by Romila Thapar in this volume. Thapar suggests that Jains and Buddhists developed a "sharper understanding of the centrality of a historical perspective" than their South Asian Brahminical counterparts did; they did this for various reasons, including the need to propagate their teachings publicly through the use of "narrative elements."[6] While a comprehensive treatment is beyond the scope of this contribution, a brief overview of South Asian textual and material sources that reflect Jain and Buddhist views of the past is intended to contextualize narratives, especially previous-birth stories, within a broader panorama of their respective literary, epigraphic, and artistic cultures.[7] Following the overview of Jain and Buddhist genres, the focus shifts to Buddhist appropriations of key historical figures such as the Mauryan emperor Aśoka, the Indo-Greek king Menander, and Indo-Scythian (Śaka), Kuṣāṇa, and Alchon Hun rulers known from inscriptions, coins, and literary sources. Reconfigurations of South Asian history in Jain and Buddhist narratives indicate how interpreting the past plays a pivotal role in turning the *Dharmacakra* (table 6.1).

Jain genres of history

Jain ways of recording and thinking about the past closely parallel the development of Buddhist genres of historical narratives. In an article on "Genres of Jain History" (1995), John Cort distinguishes Jain "universal history," applicable to all mankind,

from "localized histories" with details of particular clan and sectarian lineages. As Cort observes, "at a fundamental level, nothing new ever happens in universal history" (475), since scholastic "slotting" of events in hagiographies of previous lives of twenty-four Jinas (culminating with Mahāvīra) erases individual distinctions between them. Such "sacred histories" (*Heilsgeschichten*) emphasize the "general connection of all things" (480), but stories about these religious figureheads are situated in relation to the "current location on an ever-revolving wheel of time" (473). Strongly didactic Jain narratives about the Jinas and other exemplary figures took the form of independent genres classified as "tellings" (*kathā* or *kathānaka*) and "deeds" (*caritra*) in the early centuries CE, and are elaborated in commentaries and other compilations from the sixth century CE onwards (Balbir 1994: 223–61; Handiqui 1968: 408–35). Later Jain genres of *prabandha*s, *vandana*s, and *mahākāvya*s with meritorious stories of monks, kings, and lay supporters fulfilled pedagogical purposes (Cort 1995: 486–90). Such stylized biographies are often linked to chronicles (*āvalī*s) of Jain monastic lineages and clan histories that support claims of particular sectarian groups (*gaccha*) of monks and nuns to serve families.[8] The localized literary evidence can be correlated with inscriptions that record donations of images by patrons belonging to caste groups and by rulers such as Kharavela, whose Prakrit inscription at Hāthigumphā in modern Orissa (eastern India) provides evidence of Jain image worship in the first century BCE.[9] Jain historical attitudes are aptly characterized by Paul Dundas: "the obligation to hand down the teachings has created a community and a culture with their own memories and resonances which are not bounded solely by objective historical data, however indispensable it may be to attempt to retrieve them" (2002: 112).

Buddhist genres of hagiography and history

Like the Jain genres briefly surveyed above, Buddhist hagiographies and histories of the Buddhist *Sangha* interpret the past by locating earlier characters and events in specific places and times. However, the "Buddha of story" is not necessarily identical to the "Buddha of history" (Strong 2001: 2), and historicist efforts to

Table 6.2   Relative Chronology of Literary Texts and Manuscripts

First century CE	British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments of Gāndhārī *avadāna*s
Late fourth century CE	Pali *Dīpavaṃsa*
Late fifth century CE	Pali *Mahāvaṃsa*
Ninth century CE	Buddhist Sanskrit *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*
Eleventh century CE	Sanskrit *Rājataraṅgiṇī*
Thirteenth century CE	Sinhala *Thūpavaṃsa*

demythologize his life-story by extracting objective historical facts from multilayered versions of literary hagiographies (none of which is strictly authoritative) often reproduce or introduce anachronistic viewpoints.[10] Traditional retellings often reveal more about the period of their own composition and transmission than the Buddha's own lifetime in the fifth century BCE. Buddhist literary efforts to localize hagiographical events in both geographical and chronological frameworks sharply contrast with the perspectives of older Vedic texts, which were viewed as eternal texts not composed by humans. As Oskar von Hinüber points out, "The idea of remembering the places where the Buddha was supposed to have delivered a certain *sūtra* at the beginning of each individual text was certainly an innovation" (2006 [2008]: 197).

The expansion of pilgrimage places linked to events in the Buddha's life, including his initial teaching by turning the *Dharmacakra* at Sarnath, "grew in tandem" (Strong 2001: 6) with literary hagiographies, art, and archaeological sites, which were sometimes marked with inscriptions. For example, a stone pillar inscription of the Mauryan ruler Aśoka after he had been ruling for twenty years (circa 250 BCE) commemorates his visit to Lumbinī in southern Nepal, where he "came in person and worshiped, because the Buddha Śākyamuni was born here" (Salomon 1998: 264).[11] The history of Buddhism was closely tied to the history of relics since the establishment of various types of relics (extending from physical relics and relics of contact to visual commemorative relics and written materials considered to be the "Dharma body") in stupas and other shrines expanded the Buddha's presence far outside of the regions where he had lived and taught.[12] Narratives associated with relics, such as the story of merchants named Trapuṣa and Bhallika who enshrined hair and nail relics in stupas in their home country after giving gruel and honey to the Buddha immediately following his awakening in Bodh Gaya, appeal to particular groups of lay devotees and patrons and reflect how the past is employed to form and solidify ties between religious and geographical identity.[13] Many of these narratives have been incorporated into monastic collections of *vinaya* rules that are often explicitly connected with episodes in the Buddha's lifetime (or previous births of himself and his followers) in order to justify the rationale for normative regulations, even when scenarios clearly relate to much later stages in the history of Buddhism.[14]

Buddhist narrative genres linking the life of the historical Buddha with the time of previous Buddhas provided a framework for interpreting the religious significance of past actions, events, and characters in relationship to the present. *Jātaka* stories transmitted in prose and verse versions in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, and Buddhist vernacular languages illustrate the previous lives of Bodhisattvas destined to become Buddhas and other prominent figures.[15] In the typical structure, actions performed by human and animal characters in a prior lifetime in the "story of the past" (Pali *atītavatthu*) are connected to the "story of the present" (Pali *paccuppannavatthu*) that frames or legitimizes the past narrative with reference to the historical Buddha's biography through an identification (Pali *samodhāna*) in which the protagonist and other characters are predicted to become

the historical Buddha Śākyamuni or to play a significant role in his life or the future history of the Buddhist community. Buddhist narratives of past and present lives illustrate themes of "ripening of karma" (*karmavipāka*), whereby beneficial intentions and conduct are rewarded in future births, but misconduct leads to pain or suffering (Clark 2011).

A closely related genre of narratives called *avadāna*s (Sanskrit) or *apadāna*s (Pali) often emphasize this theme, although literary distinctions between Pali *apadāna*s that mostly concern characters other than the historical Buddha and *jātaka*s of his previous births as a Bodhisattva do not apply to Buddhist *avadāna*s generally. In the earliest written testimony for the development of the *avadāna* genre in abbreviated prose outlines composed as secondary texts on birchbark scrolls in the British Library collection of Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts from the first century CE, "ripening of karma" is not necessarily the dominant theme and *avadāna*s about the characters' present lives are distinguished by "orientation in time" (Lenz 2003: 92) from other stories labeled as "previous births" (Sanskrit *pūrvayoga* / Gāndhārī *provayoga*).[16] While many of these Gāndhārī narratives are set in India at the time of the historical Buddha in the fifth century BCE, others incorporate historical figures and officials who acted as patrons and probably protectors of regional Buddhist communities in the northwestern borderlands of South Asia in a period of dynamic political and cultural change in the early first century CE (Neelis 2008). For example, in the "second *avadāna* of Zadamitra" (a character with an Indo-Iranian hybrid name), Aśpavarman (a figure who is known from coins and inscriptions as a "general" [*stratega*] of the regional Apraca dynasty in modern-day northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan in the early decades of the first century CE) participates in a dialogue during the rainy-season retreat after extending invitations to members of the monastic community (Lenz 2010: 85–93). Stories of past and present lives transmitted in various literary genres as well as through oral performance and in visual media of Buddhist sculpture and painting fulfilled various purposes: they served as paradigmatic exemplars to promote ideal models of religious conduct, provided etiological explanations and ideological explanations, and enthralled both monastic and lay audiences with edifying narratives that directly conveyed the salience of the *Dharma*.

Modern scholarship most often associates Pali *vaṃsa* literary texts, which are sometimes characterized as "chronicles" of Sri Lankan history reported from the perspective of the Mahāvihārin monastic lineage, with Buddhist history.[17] *Vaṃsa* (Sanskrit *vaṃśa*), literally meaning "genealogy" (von Hinüber 1996: 87) or "lineage" (Collins 1992: 244) symbolized by the segments of a bamboo stalk, can be related to hagiographical genres of narratives discussed earlier, since the aspirations made at the feet of previous Buddhas by Bodhisattvas in the Pali *Buddhavaṃsa* provided a model for the development of histories of the Buddhist community on the island of Sri Lanka (Walters 2000: 101). The *Dīpavaṃsa* (late fourth century CE) and *Mahāvaṃsa* (late fifth century CE) both narrate the initial establishment and propagation of Buddhism in India and in Sri Lanka from the

time of King Devānāmpiya Tissa, who, according to these accounts, is directly linked with the Mauryan emperor Aśoka through monastic missions led by Aśoka's son Mahinda and daughter Saṅghamittā. The *Cūlavaṃsa* and commentaries on the *Mahāvaṃsa* continue to relate the religious history of Buddhism and political history up to 1815. Other Pali and vernacular Sinhalese *vaṃsa*s connect particular relics (*Dhātuvaṃsa*) and stūpas (*Thūpavaṃsa*) with localities, such as the "Great Stūpa" (*Mahāthūpa*) at Anurādhapura. In his study of the thirteenth-century Sinhalese version of the *Thūpavaṃsa*, Stephen Berkwitz (2004: 64) comments on the "transformative potency" of such histories to shape religious devotion:

> Buddhist history typically reads the present through the past, since that which is recalled from earlier times is envisioned to have had direct and immediate consequences upon people's current lives … [T]he transformative potency of Buddhist histories comes from their capacity to engender emotions and instill obligations that contribute to the shaping of a devotee into a virtuous person who is aware of and acts upon one's relationship to the past.

Thus, texts such as the vernacular *Thūpavaṃsa* "worked to give the past an immediacy and significance for people living in the present" (Berkwitz 2004: 181) or, as proposed at the beginning of the *Dīpavaṃsa* (1.2), arouse rapture and delight (*pītipāmojja*), serene joy (*pasādeyya*), and mental pleasure (*manorama*).

Pali and vernacular *vaṃsa* literature is one among several regional Buddhist genres for recording, writing, and thinking about the past in medieval South Asia, East Asia, and Tibet. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, a Buddhist Sanskrit medieval text on ritual practices probably compiled in Bengal during the Pāla period in the ninth century, views earlier phases of South Asian history as well as the religious and cultural geography from contemporary Buddhist and purāṇic perspectives while presenting the fluctuations in the fortunes of Buddhist communities and their patrons as *ex eventu* prophecies connected with the rise and fall of the True Dharma.[18] Traditions of historical writing about the lives of eminent monks and nuns and comprehensive histories of Buddhism in East Asia were influenced by Confucian models for recording history that tend to overshadow the study of Buddhist sources.[19] In apparent contrast to Indian Buddhist literary cultures that provided many of the textual materials and intellectual models for Tibetan Buddhists, "a notable exception is the intense preoccupation of Tibet's men of letters with history and historiography" (van der Kuijp 1996: 40).[20] The vast array of Buddhist ways of preserving historical memories in oral and literary texts, inscriptions, rituals, and images in South, Southeast, Central, and East Asia, selectively summarized here, is very difficult to typify or classify into typologies.[21] Rather than giving an overview of almost 2500 years of Buddhist history across Asia, the following case studies of early South Asian historical figures remembered in Buddhist traditions indicate how religious configurations of the past overlap and contrast with other sources.[22]

Paradigms of Buddhist Rulership

Aśoka's legacy as Dharmarāja

Jain and Buddhist traditions view the emergence of the Mauryas in northern India in the late fourth century BCE as pivotal for the history of their communities. Jains claim that Candragupta Maurya, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty (identified with Sandrokottos in western classical accounts of Alexander of Macedon's expedition to India in 327–325 BCE), renounced his throne to follow the Jain elder Bhadrabāhu to southern India. Buddhist Sanskrit *avadāna*s, Pali *vaṃsa*s, and Chinese and Tibetan texts portray Candragupta's grandson Aśoka (ruling circa 270–232) as the "King of Dharma" (*Dharmarāja*) and deliberately exaggerate his affiliation with and patronage of Buddhism.[23] However, epigraphical evidence from Aśokan inscriptions – the earliest written documents for studying ancient Indian history that shed valuable light on the social and religious conditions in which Buddhist institutions began to flourish – do not support the Buddhist literary image of Aśoka as an exclusive patron of Buddhism. Instead, passages in Aśoka's major rock edicts call for donations to *śramaṇas* and Brahmins and honoring all religious groups. Nevertheless, his call for "restraint of speech, so as not to extol one's own religious group or denigrate others' at improper occasions, or only to do so mildly on appropriate occasions" (12th Major Rock Edict), reflects interreligious competition for imperial patronage. Inscriptions in the Barabar Caves recording donations by Aśoka to an Ājīvika community demonstrate that he fulfilled the traditional role of a ruler as a patron of multiple religious groups.[24]

Aśoka's interpretation of Dharma as a general sense of religious piety, personal morality, and social ethics overlapped with Buddhist views but was not specifically Buddhist, although his promotion of an imperial Dharma policy seems to correspond with the growth of Buddhist institutions. Aśoka explicitly identifies himself as a Buddhist lay follower (*upāsaka*) in his minor rock edicts and other inscriptions addressed directly to Buddhist communities. His visits to the site of the Buddha's birthplace at Lumbinī and awakening at Bodh Gaya show that he personally embraced Buddhist pilgrimage practices. Aśoka certainly had personal as well as official interests in the affairs of the monastic *Sangha*, but the expansion of Buddhist institutions is probably due to relatively stable social and economic conditions rather than his exclusive patronage. While Buddhist literary accounts clearly "appropriated Aśoka for their own use" (Norman 1997: 127), the *Mahābhārata* and non-Buddhist Sanskrit literary sources generally downplay his legacy, perhaps because his elevation as the model Buddhist ruler (which has persisted far beyond South Asia) rang all too true for Brahmins struggling against Buddhists, Jains, and others for pieces of the imperial pie (see also Fitzgerald, this vol.).

Menander, an Indo-Greek emulator of Aśoka?

Buddhist literary sources extend the Aśokan paradigm of ideal Buddhist rulership to foreign rulers who seized power in the northwestern borderlands of South Asia after the Mauryan empire declined at the beginning of the second century BCE. Menander, an Indo-Greek king of the Punjab and areas of northwestern India around 150, is known in both Buddhist and western classical traditions and from his coinage.[25] Pali and Chinese versions of a dialogue between a Buddhist monk named Nāgasena and Menander (*Questions of Menander / Pali Milindapañha*) portray him as a Buddhist patron, but he converts to Buddhism and becomes a lay follower only in the expanded Pali version.[26] While Menander's silver coins do not indicate Buddhist affinities, issues of his bronze coins include a wheel symbol associated with a wheel-turning emperor (*cakravartin*) or the wheel of dharma (*dharmacakra*). Plutarch's *Moralia* (821D–E) refers to the distribution of Menander's relics (*mnēmeia*), which seem more likely to be connected with Hellenistic hero cults than Buddhist worship of a lay patron's relics.[27] Thus, in the Pali (and to a somewhat lesser extent Chinese) Buddhist historical memory, Menander is adopted "as one of theirs" (Lamotte 1988: 425), but he probably supported a wide array of competing religious groups in emulation of more powerful predecessors like Aśoka.

Śaka intermediaries for Buddhist transmission

As the regional power of Indo-Greek successors of Menander diminished, groups migrating to South Asia from Central Asia and the Iranian plateau known as Śakas (related to Scythians in western classical sources) took control of long-distance routes in northwestern India. Their ascent corresponds to the growth of Buddhist institutions in the northwestern borderlands during the first centuries BCE and CE. The active patronage of the Śakas as well as their subordinates and allies, who established Buddhist relics in stupas, constructed monasteries, and donated images and other materials, is well attested in early Buddhist manuscripts from Gandhāra, pre-Kuṣāṇa sculptures from Mathurā, and inscriptions from northwestern and western South Asia. Inclusion of General Aśpavaraman, Mahākṣatrapa Jihonika, a Kardamaga king, and other Śakas as characters in Gāndhārī *avadāna*s acknowledges their support for "the great flowering of Gandhāran Buddhism" (Salomon 1999: 180). Despite substantial Śaka contributions, they have received much less adulation in extant Buddhist sources than earlier figures such as Menander and later Kuṣāṇa emperors (aside from the aforementioned manuscript fragments and epigraphic references). Although they acted as donors to multiple groups without necessarily adopting an exclusively Buddhist identity, they are characterized as barbarian invaders in *ex eventu* prophecies of decline and disorder (*adharma*) in Hindu and Buddhist eschatologies and assimilated as degraded *kṣatriya*s into the *varṇa*

hierarchy due to their status as impure foreigners (Lamotte 1988: 488–89; Hiltebeitel 2011: 286–89). Nevertheless, previous characterizations of the Śakas as "the great intermediators" (Konow 1929: xxvi) who facilitated the import of Iranian, Hellenistic, and Central Asian elements into South Asia and the export of Buddhism to Central Asia and eventually to East Asia are now confirmed by recent discoveries of manuscripts, inscriptions, and sculptures in addition to further recognition of their historical roles as religious, artistic, and literary patrons.[28]

Paradigms of patronage under the Kuṣāṇas

Kuṣāṇa consolidation of an empire encompassing a vast network from western Central Asia to the northern Indian subcontinent from the first to third centuries CE accelerated patterns of Buddhist transmission beyond South Asia, but Buddhist traditions that compare the emperor Kaniṣka to Aśoka and refer to his successor Huviṣka as a Mahāyāna follower may be seen as hagiographic *topoi* rather than as evidence of their exclusive support of Buddhism. By the time of Kaniṣka in the second century CE, Kuṣāṇa administration of a chain of cities from the Oxus basin to the Ganges delta effectively unified major nodes of the "northern route" (Sanskrit *Uttarāpatha*).[29] Economic and political conditions during the Kuṣāṇa period helped generate material surpluses that supported Buddhist institutions, as indicated by epigraphical records of gifts of relics, stupas, monasteries, images, and a wide range of items from donors who served under the Kuṣāṇas or acknowledged their authority. Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī inscriptions refer to large Buddhist monasteries (*vihāra*s) in Peshawar and Mathura named after Kaniṣka and his successor Huviṣka, but a wide range of Kuṣāṇa epigraphic and numismatic data shows that multiple religious communities received support.[30] Although the Buddha's image appears on some of Kaniṣka's coins, numerous Iranian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Hindu deities are more frequently depicted. Chinese, Tibetan, Central Asian, and Iranian Buddhist narratives prominently feature Kaniṣka as convener of a fourth Buddhist council (just as Theravāda traditions associate Aśoka with a third council) in Kashmir, Gandhāra, or the Punjab (where Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts were supposedly written on copper plates) and as the literary patron of Aśvaghoṣa (author of the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*) and Mātṛceta (whose "Letter to Mahārāja Kaṇika" [*Mahārājakaṇikalekha*] instructed him in Buddhist principles).[31]

A Buddhist Sanskrit version of an *avadāna* preserved in a fourth-century manuscript fragment from Bamiyan refers to Huviṣka as a Mahāyāna Buddhist devotee, but Chinese parallels shift the setting for the story between the courts of Prasenajit of Kosala in the Buddha's time and Huviṣka in the Kuṣāṇa period (Salomon 2002: 256). While a Brāhmī inscription from Mathura written on the pedestal of an image of the Buddha Amitābha and dated at or near the beginning of Huviṣka's reign suggests that the second century CE was a pivotal period for early Mahāyāna developments, it does not confirm that Huviṣka promoted

Mahāyāna. Epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological evidence clearly shows that the regional and local subordinates of the Kuṣāṇas (like their Indo-Greek and Śaka predecessors) sponsored diverse Buddhist, Jain, Hindu, and local religious shrines and monasteries, perhaps in a Kuṣāṇa imperial effort to overcome foreign origins and gain status as powerful "wheel-turning" emperors (*cakravartins*; Verardi 1983). Buddhist historical recollections of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka as major patrons reflect conditions of intensified commercial exchange, dynamic mobility, and cross-cultural contact that fostered the proliferation of Buddhist monasteries in South Asia and expansion to regions outside of the Indian subcontinent under the Kuṣāṇa aegis.

Bad reputation of the barbarous Huns vs. Buddhist historical realities

Despite an exaggerated reputation as oppressive barbarians in Chinese Buddhist pilgrims' accounts and in Sanskrit literary sources, the Alchon Huns (Sanskrit Hūṇas) aided Buddhist expansion by acting as political and cultural mediators between India, Iran, and Central Asia in the fifth and sixth centuries CE. Like the Śakas and Kuṣāṇas, the Alchon Huns followed similar migration paths from Central Asia to Bactria (northern Afghanistan), and eventually supplanted regional Kidāra rulers, who self-consciously styled themselves as "restorers of the previous order" of the Kuṣāṇas (Grenet 2002: 206–7). Unlike the Kidāras, the Alchon Huns abandoned Kuṣāṇa titles, used Brāhmī and Bactrian (instead of Pahlavi) on their coins and seals, and portrayed themselves with distinctively deformed heads. In addition to engaging in conflicts and alliances with Iranian Sasanian rulers, the Alchon Huns exchanged diplomatic missions with the Chinese court and directly contributed to the downfall of the Gupta dynasty by making inroads far into central India. While claims of defeating the Hūṇas are frequently repeated in Sanskrit *praśasti* inscriptions and literature, other inscriptions directly connect the Alchon Huns with donations to Buddhist monasteries and record gifts by their subordinates to Hindu temples. For example, a Sanskrit inscription dated to 492/3 CE and written on a copper scroll extensively quotes Mahāyāna texts and records valuable information about Alchon Huns named as secondary donors of a reliquary stupa in a region "adorned with stupa resembling a multitude of autumn clouds" (Melzer 2006: 277). While this inscription and another Buddhist inscription from Kura in the Salt Range of Pakistan show that Buddhist institutions continued to receive substantial support at the time of the Alchon Hun ruler Toramāṇa, his son Mihirakula is described as a violent persecutor of Buddhists by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (in an account of his visit to India in the seventh century).[32] Although a major Buddhist shrine at Harwan in Kashmir was built during the period of the Alchon Huns, Mihirakula is derided as a "*Vetāla* (vampire) day and night surrounded by thousands of murdered human beings" (Stein 1900: 1.291) in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, a historical "chronicle" of Kashmir composed in ornate Sanskrit by Kalhaṇa in

the eleventh century. Paradoxically then, Chinese Buddhist and Indian Sanskrit historical memory has not been kind to Mihirakula and his Alchon Hun predecessors, who are portrayed as barbarian destroyers of Buddhist and other religious institutions, despite epigraphic and archaeological evidence for patronage of Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples during their reigns.

Conclusions: Relevance of Buddhist and Jain Stories of the Past

Recording, writing, and reenacting narratives about past figures and events were essential to the economic, social, and cultural growth of Buddhist and Jain communities. In widespread didactic narratives of both traditions, stories of the past provide etiological frameworks for explaining causal relationships between previous actions and current circumstances through "ripening of karma." Flexible macrohistorical narratives link exemplary lives of past Buddhas and Jinas to contemporary contexts, promote practices of making donations to monastic communities, illustrate norms of meritorious conduct, and buttress traditional claims to religious authority. Temporal details and geographical or cultural localizations connect the stories of past and present to periods of specific religious and political figures (such as those listed in the chronological overview at the beginning of this chapter) and to particular places in ancient India, the northwestern frontiers of Gandhāra, Sri Lanka, and beyond the frontiers of South Asia. While references to when and where specific acts took place, discourses were taught, or miracles were performed are not verifiable (especially since many stories begin with standardized formulae), the aim of contextualizing narratives in time and place indicates ongoing concerns with establishing connections with the past. Even today, monks, nuns, and lay teachers responsible for turning the "wheel of Dharma" (*Dharmacakra*) continue to transmit and represent stories of the past through oral, written, and visual narratives.

Interpreting the past is clearly important for Jain and Buddhist traditions, but what can the study of various narrative genres contribute to an understanding of historiography within and outside of South Asia? While linkages between narratives of past and present through identifications are standard structural components of *avadānas* and *jātakas* (as they were developed in Buddhist literary traditions), it is not possible to identify an explicit theory of Buddhist historiography.[33] Scholars have criticized the "Buddhological construct" (Walters 1998) of periodizing Buddhist history into phases associated with the historical Buddha, the formation of the early *Sangha*, Aśoka's purported sponsorship of missions, "medieval" decline, and modern revival. According to John Maraldo, "the search for historical consciousness in Buddhism is itself a reflection of modern, and mostly western, historical consciousness" (1986: 34). John Cort similarly observes that the "Jains' own understandings of their history do not fit neatly into western historical categories" (1995: 496).

While such caveats and criticisms of imagining and constructing Buddhist or Jain senses of history in improper alignment with western academic notions of history must be acknowledged, it is nevertheless clear that "Buddhists [and Jains] did formulate (or adopt from their immediate environment) certain basic notions concerning the overall nature of time and history" (Nattier 1991: 9). Jan Nattier distinguishes cosmological cycles for structuring time in different ages for the fluctuating fortunes of the Buddhist Dharma from Buddhological schematic enumerations of past Buddhas and predictions of the True Dharma's disappearance. Asking "what kinds of history might there be, for Buddhists?" Timothy Barrett proposes a quadratic contrast between "histories of common experience and of particular experience" and "of common imagination and of particular imagination" (2005: 127). In *Nirvāṇa and Other Buddhist Felicities* (1998), Steven Collins attempts to situate the collective memory (perhaps akin to Barrett's "common imagination") of the Theravāda Buddhist literary tradition (which he terms the "Pali *imaginaire*") in real world history. In an effort to formulate a typology of the "rich array of historical schemes used to make sense of a changing world" in Asian Buddhist literature, John Maraldo (2004: 333) classifies *vaṃśa* genealogies and other genres (discussed earlier in this chapter) as "didactic history" (with an agenda), East Asian lineage accounts of teachers and disciples as "seamless transmission" and "comprehensive vision," Tibetan histories as "regeneration of a cosmological order," and Japanese comprehensive and international histories of the transmission of Dharma as "visionary history." While Jain traditions in South Asia and Buddhist traditions in South, Southeast, Central, and East Asian cultures have taken a variety of approaches to interpreting the past in relation to the present and future, the importance of narrative structures for understanding time and history is a major emphasis in both traditional religious contexts and recent scholarship.

The examples discussed in this chapter illustrate various ways in which Buddhist and Jain genres of macrohistorical religious narratives, inscriptions, art, and archaeology demonstrate etiological patterns for the revolving "Wheel of Dharma" (*Dharmacakra*) in previous, current, and future ages. From Aśoka's time onwards, literary and material sources reflect Buddhist and Jain concerns with stimulating and sustaining religious patronage by rulers, merchants, and a wide range of other donors who made gifts to monastic communities in exchange for religious merit and the "Gift of Dharma" (*Dharmadāna*). Buddhist historical traditions implicitly apply past paradigms to present conditions by comparing exemplary Buddhist patrons like Prasenajit (king of Kosala in the Buddha's time), Aśoka (the third-century BCE Mauryan ruler), and Devānāmpiya Tissa (the Sri Lankan contemporary of Aśoka) to later historical figures such as the Indo-Greek king Menander (second century BCE) and the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka (second century CE). However, just as Buddhist hagiographic appropriations of Aśokan narratives do not always match the epigraphic evidence of his inscriptions, Śaka and Alchon Hun support for the expansion of Buddhist monastic networks is not clearly recalled in Buddhist literary texts, which instead connect these groups and selected figures

(such as Mihirakula) with eschatological prophecies of the impending disappearance of the True Dharma and violent persecution. Thus, Buddhist and Jain records of selected historical characters, peoples, and events must be interpreted with care, bearing in mind that the exemplary function of ideal models of the past was inseparable from religious imperatives and the concerns of present audiences.

Literary elaboration, visual illustration, and performances of hagiographical narratives of Jinas and Buddhas and prior births of exemplary figures contribute directly to the growth and survival of Jain and Buddhist communities within and outside of South Asia. The process of localizing stories of past lives is closely connected to the establishment of relics in stupas in regions outside of the Jain and Buddhist heartlands in ancient northeastern India. Just as relics of Jinas and Buddhas continue to make their physical presence in the past tangible for present devotees, domestication of narratives about their lives in texts, rituals, and art connects devotees to places where they traveled (sometimes in apocryphal journeys), where their relics were distributed (for example, in the narrative of the two merchants), and where episodes from previous births were localized at pilgrimage shrines. Buddhist pilgrims and missionaries as well as Jain monks and nuns adapted macrohistorical narratives of past lives to different cultural contexts and employed this religious history for proselytizing purposes. Rather than preserving stories of the past as disinterested chronicles of earlier events or straightforward biographical accounts bereft of legend, Buddhist and Jain religious historians aimed to make the past more interesting and entertaining than it may actually have been. While Jain or Buddhist philosophies of history may not have been clearly articulated and are not easy to identify, flexible conceptions of the past continue to be relevant and meaningful in the present.

Notes

1   In his paper at the conference underlying this volume, David Carr emphasized that "the past plays an enduring role in the life of the present." Carr's observations that future, present, and past are mutually determined (1986: 31) and that unification of action in time is a pivotal feature of historical thought (1986: 40) resonate quite well with Buddhist and Jain concepts of the past. In contrast to theorists such as Hayden White and Paul Ricoeur who highlight the imaginary construction of historical narratives in discontinuity with reality, Carr insists that "narrative structure pervades our very experience of time and social existence" (1986: 9). John Maraldo emphasizes the centrality of narratives in defining a Buddhist concept of history thus: "History in its barest sense is a narrative account that connects the present with the past in anticipation of an open future" (2004: 332). Also see Maraldo 1986: 28–34 for reflections on "The possibility of a Buddhist sense of history" (primarily from the perspective of East Asian Buddhist sources).
2   Collins 1992 proposes that three modes of time can be discerned in early Buddhism: non-repetitive time, repetitive time, and the time of texts. Conflicting Buddhist theories of time contributed to early sectarian divisions between the Sarvāstivādins, who maintained that *dharma*s (as ontological qualities, phenomena, and events) could simultaneously exist in

the past, present, and future, and other groups who distinguished the existence of separate *dharma*s in different time periods.

3 In addition to remarks on the four *yuga*s by Fitzgerald and Thapar (both in this volume), see González-Reimann 2009: 415–22 for relationships between *kalpa*, *yuga*, and *manvantara* cosmic cycles.

4 Hiltebeitel 2011: 124–26 outlines basic early Indian Buddhist senses of Dharma as the Buddha's "teaching," the "truth" accessible by following the path he has taught, rules for good behavior (especially for monks and nuns), underlying qualities or natures, and ontological phenomena classified in Abhidharma literature. Qvarnström 2009 [2004] surveys Dharma in Jainism, explaining how denotations of ethics and ontologies of motion become associated with a more general sense of Jain teachings about "a universal order governing all activity in the cosmos" (2009: 178).

5 Dundas 2002: 19–22 provides a brief overview of Jain time cycles and the "Universal History" of Jain "fordmakers" (Sanskrit: *tīrthāṅkara*s). Nattier 1991: 19–26; Strong 2001: 19–27 give accounts of 7, 15, 24, 1000, 125,000, 387,000, and infinite previous Buddhas (Nattier remarks that the enumeration of 24 Buddhas may have been a "Buddhist attempt at keeping up with the Jainas" [1991: 21]). In some lists, the four Buddhas of the present "auspicious eon" (*bhadrakalpa*) culminate with the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and the future Buddha Maitreya. Early Buddhist manuscript fragments of Mahāvadāna- and Bhadrakalpika-sūtra genres in the Library of Congress and the Schøyen and Hirayama collections indicate that such accounts of previous Buddhas were transmitted in Buddhist literary cultures of "Greater" Gandhāra in the 1st – 3rd centuries CE (Allon and Salomon 2010: 6–7). Collins comments that although the details in the lives of the Buddhas may differ, "the truth they discover is the same" (1992: 239). Similarly, Dundas remarks that in the traditional Jain view, "Mahāvīra is merely one of a chain of teachers who all communicate the same truths in broadly similar ways" (2002: 19). In contrast to emic viewpoints, Bronkhorst 2007 argues that Buddhist and Jain doctrinal positions concerning karmic retribution and the existence or nonexistence of a permanent self (*ātman*) emerge from the intellectual milieu of "Greater Magadha" shared by the Ājīvikas and the composers of certain early Upaniṣads.

6 Thapar (this volume) states that "although the texts were written to enhance the learning of the monks, the narrative elements, usually accompanied by a moral, were intended for lay people." While the monastic production of these texts is certainly clear, they were not intended only for lay audiences.

7 Warder 1972: 26–37 provides a succinct general survey of literary sources for Buddhist and Jain "historiography," but excludes inscriptions.

8 Cort 1995: 480–85 emphasizes that purity of lineage is critical for Jains and draws parallels between Jain *āvalī*s and Buddhist *vaṃsa*s. Granoff 1989: 200–15 examines links between clan histories and monastic lineages belonging to periods between the 11th and 16th centuries CE.

9 Thorough treatment of Jain epigraphy is beyond the scope of this chapter, but comments by Dundas 2002: 113–15 indicate the importance of inscriptions for understanding early Jain history.

10 Historicist approaches to the biography of the Buddha in which Pali and Sanskrit literary sources are privileged over vernacular traditions have been criticized by Hallisey 1995; Strong 2001. See Neelis 2011: 41–48 for methodological considerations in approaching South Asian Buddhist literary texts in Pali, Sanskrit, and Gāndhārī.

11   Rummindei Minor Pillar Edict of Aśoka, line 2: *atana āgāca mahīyite hida budhe jāte sakyamunī ti*. See Falk 2006: 177–80 for further references and a slightly different sentence division in his translation: "he came in person and paid reverence. Because the Buddha, the Śākyamuni, was born at this place …" (180).

12   In a discussion of relics in Buddhist texts with different sectarian affiliations, Skilling 2005 proposes that the history of Buddhism can be viewed as the history of relics. Strong 2004; Neelis 2011: 56–58 discuss relic classifications, the value of relic deposits as historical data, and secondary literature.

13   In addition to literary references to Trapuṣa and Bhallika in Sanskrit, Pali and Chinese sources compiled by Malalasekera 1937–38: 1.991; Bareau 1963: 106–23; Lamotte 1988: 66, a Gāndhārī version of the story is preserved in a 2nd-century CE Kharoṣṭhī manuscript in the Senior collection (Allon 2007: 17–18). Strong 2004: 72–82 refers to traditions connecting the hair and nail relics to Myanmar and Sri Lanka, although the Chinese account of Xuanzang associates Trapuṣa and Bhallika with Bactria. Rather than viewing Buddhist versions of the gift of the two merchants as reflections of historical reality, Granoff (2005) interprets them as reworkings of Jain hagiographies to set Buddhists apart in order to attract support from urban merchant communities.

14   The relative dating of Buddhist *vinaya*s of separate lineages remains contentious, and scholars such as Schopen (2004; 2006: 317) stress that the normative rules presuppose socio-economic contexts of permanent residential monasteries rather than the peripatetic ideal of the Buddha's time.

15   Von Hinüber 1998 thoroughly analyzes the textual history of Pali *jātaka* verses and prose narratives in comparison to versions in Sutta and Vinaya *piṭaka*s as well as in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, while Appleton 2010 comments on the ideological development of Pali *jātaka*s in relation to other Pali genres. In the Pali collection, an account of the lives of 24 previous Buddhas in the *Nidānakathā* preceded more than 500 *jātaka*s.

16   Lenz 2003: part II is an edition of *pūrvayoga*s; Lenz 2010 is an edition of *avadāna*s (additional *avadāna*s in the British Library collection are being edited by Lenz and Neelis and *avadāna*s in the "Split" collection are being edited by Harry Falk). Also see Salomon 1999: 35–36, 145–49 for introductory comments about Gāndhārī *avadāna*s and *pūrvayoga*s in comparison to *avadāna*s in Sanskrit literature.

17   Von Hinüber 1996: 87–91 provides a guide to editions and translations of Pali *vaṃsa* texts by Geiger, Oldenberg, and Malalasekera. Authors such as Collins 1992: 244–46, Trainor 1997, Walters 2000, Berkwitz 2004 criticize earlier efforts to separate empirical data from the religious and political aims of these texts and question distinctions between "chronicle" and "history" that "delegitimize" (Berkwitz 2004: 24–25) *vaṃsa*s as narratives standing outside of proper history.

18   Jayaswal and Sankṛtyayana (1934) extract historical data from selected passages of the Sanskrit text of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. See Wallis 2002 for analysis of rituals (particularly *mantra*s) in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, which he regards as "one Buddhist community's answer to the medieval concern to record, clarify, systematize, and extol the community's ritual practices" (12).

19   Brief surveys of Chinese Buddhist historiography (de Jong 1979) and Japanese Buddhist concepts of historicity (Maraldo 1986) may serve as entry points to subjects that are beyond the scope of this chapter.

20 In addition to a succinct article on Tibetan historiography by van der Kuijp (1996), an introduction to genres of Tibetan history and thorough bibliography by Martin 1997 and articles published by Kapstein 2000 elucidate the rich heritage of Tibetan Buddhist writings on the past.

21 Walters 1998, Maraldo 2004, Barrett 2005 propose alternative typologies and periodizations of Buddhist history (discussed in the conclusions to this chapter).

22 The following case studies are extracted from Neelis 2011: ch. 2 ("Historical Contexts for the Emergence and Transmission of Buddhism within South Asia" [65–181]), where interested readers can find a full discussion with additional references.

23 Strong 1983 studies and translates a Sanskrit *avadāna* of Aśoka in the *Divyāvadāna*, and in "Aśoka and the Buddha relics" (2004: 124–49) examines Aśoka's legacy outside of South Asia.

24 Neelis 2011: 81–94 treats the inscriptions of Aśoka in more detail (including the 12th Major Rock Edict). For dedications by Aśoka and his grandson Daśaratha to the Ājīvikas in cave inscriptions at Barabar and Nagarjuni, see Falk 2006: 255–79.

25 Fussman 1993 is a very useful corrective to earlier views of scholars such as Lamotte 1988: 420–26.

26 Lamotte 1988: 423–26; Fussman 1993: 66–82 largely base their comparisons of Pali and Chinese versions on Demiéville 1924. The later expansion of the 5th-century CE Pali *Milindapañha* has frequently been translated into English (see von Hinüber 1996: 82–86 for further references to the Pali text and commentary).

27 Comments by Burkert 1985: 203 on votive gifts and sacrifices to grave monuments (*hērōon*) that establish the "effective presence" in a "specific locality" of the hero cult resonate with Buddhist veneration of relics discussed by Lamotte 1988: 421; Fussman 1993: 65.

28 Salomon 1999; Pollock 2006: 67–73; Neelis 2007: 56–89; 2011: 115–32; Quintanilla 2007 have drawn attention to recent discoveries of manuscripts and inscriptions and to the role of Śaka rulers in Mathura and Gujarat as artistic and literary patrons.

29 A Bactrian inscription from Rabatak (northern Afghanistan) in a sanctuary with images of Iranian gods and goddesses who are named in other inscriptions along with interlinear notations of corresponding Indian deities clarifies early Kuṣāṇa genealogy and lists northern Indian cities to reinforce claims that Kaniṣka had "submitted all India to his will" (Sims-Williams 2004 [2008]: 56).

30 A Kharoṣṭhī inscription on the so-called Kaniṣka casket from Shāh-jī-kī-Ḍherī (Konow 1929: 135–37) was thought to have been a reliquary donated by Kaniṣka, but is now understood as a "perfume box" given by two administrative superintendents in "Kaniṣka's monastery." Brāhmī inscriptions from Jamālpur mound in Mathura (Basu 2006) include a gift of the monk Jīvaka from Oḍḍiyāna (Swat valley) "in the monastery of the mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra Hūvīṣka" (Lüders 1961: 68, §31).

31 Rosenfield (1967: 30, 32) dismisses Kaniṣka's sponsorship of a 4th Buddhist council in Kashmir as "pious fabrication" and cautions against accepting Kaniṣka's links with prominent Buddhist literary figures at "face value."

32 Li 1996: 114. However, Kuwayama 2002: 109 cautions that Chinese visitors such as Xuanzang and Song Yun (who came to northwestern India earlier in the 6th century) attributed Buddhist persecution to Mihirakula because they were especially concerned with the decline of the Dharma and well-known Indian literary tropes associated him with cruelty.

33   Nattier observes that "nowhere in the earliest layers of the surviving Buddhist literature …
      do we find any indication that primitive Buddhism had a systematic concept of history"
      (1991: 9), and Barrett comments on the absence of a "common stock of Buddhist ideas
      concerning history" (2005: 125). Despite the apparent absence of a common theoretical
      understanding of history in early Buddhist traditions, both authors stress that interpreting
      the past was a major concern.

References

Allon, M. 2007. "Introduction: The Senior Manuscripts." In A. Glass, *Four Gāndhārī Saṃyuktāgama Sutras: Senior Kharoṣṭhi Fragment* 5, 3–25. Seattle.

Allon, M., and R. Salomon. 2010. "New Evidence for the Mahāyāna in Early Gandhāra." *Eastern Buddhist* 41.1: 1–22.

Appleton, N. 2010. *Jātaka Stories in Theravāda Buddhism: Narrating the Bodhisatta Path.* Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT.

Balbir, N. 1994. "Formes et terminologie du narrative jaina ancien." In Balbir (ed.), *Genres littéraires en Inde*, 223–61. Paris.

Bareau, A. 1963. *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sutrapitaka et les Vinayapitaka anciens.* Paris.

Barrett, T. 2005. "History." In D.S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, 124–42. Chicago.

Basu, C. 2006. "Patronage and Representation at the Huviṣka Vihāra, a Kuṣāṇa-period Monastery in Mathurā." *Studies in History* 22: 157–179.

Berkwitz, S.C. 2004. *Buddhist History in the Vernacular: The Power of the Past in Late Medieval Sri Lanka.* Leiden.

Bronkhorst, J. 2007. *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India.* Leiden.

Burkert, W. 1985. *Greek Religion.* Trans. J. Raffan. Cambridge, MA.

Carr, D. 1986. *Time, Narrative, and History.* Bloomington.

Clark, C. 2011. "Karma and Karmavipāka in Early Buddhist Avadāna Literature." *Journal of South Asia* 43: 23–34.

Collins, S. 1992. "Nirvāṇa, Time, and Narrative." *History of Religions* 31.3: 215–46.

Collins, S. 1998. *Nirvāṇa and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire.* Cambridge.

Cort, J. 1995. "Genres of Jain History." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 23.4: 469–506.

de Jong, J.W. 1979. "A Brief Survey of Chinese Buddhist Historiography." In G. Schopen (ed.), *Buddhist Studies by J.W. de Jong*, 103–110. Berkeley.

Demiéville, P. 1924. "Les versions chinoises du *Milindapañha*." *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 24: 1–264.

Dundas, P. 2002. *The Jains.* 2nd edn. London.

Falk, H. 2006. *Aśokan Sites and Artefacts: A Source-book with Bibliography.* Mainz.

Fussman, G. 1993. "L'Indo-grec Ménandre ou Paul Demiéville revisité." *Journal Asiatique* 231: 61–138.

González-Reimann, L. 2009. "Cosmic Cycles, Cosmology, and Cosmography." In K.A. Jacobsen (ed.), *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, I: 411–28. Leiden.

Granoff, P. 1989. "Religious Biography and Clan History among the Śvetāmbara Jains in North India." *East and West* 39: 195–215.

Granoff, P. 2005. "The Gift of the Two Merchants: Defining the Buddhist Community through Story." *East and West* 55: 129–38.

Grenet, F. 2002. "Regional Interaction in Central Asia and Northwest India in the Kidarite and Hephthalite Periods." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 116: 203–24.

Hallisey, C. 1995. "Roads Taken and not Taken in the Study of Theravāda Buddhism." In D.S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, 31–61. Chicago.

Handiqui, K.K. 1968. *Yaśastilaka and Indian Culture, or Somadeva's Yaśastilaka and Aspects of Jainism in Indian Thought and Culture in the Tenth Century*. Sholapur.

Hiltebeitel, A. 2011. *Dharma: Its Early History in Law, Religion, and Narrative*. Oxford.

Jayaswal, K.P., and R. Sankrityayana. 1934. *An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text [c. 700 B.C.–c. 770 A.D.] with a Special Commentary on Later Gupta Period*. Lahore. Repr. Patna, 1988.

Kapstein, M. 2000. *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory*. New York and Oxford.

Konow, S. (ed.). 1929. *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions, with the Exception of Those of Aśoka. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, II.1. Calcutta.

Kuwayama, S. 2002. *Across the Hindukush of the First Millennium: A Collection of the Papers*. Kyoto.

Lamotte, É. 1988. *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*. Trans. S. Webb-Boin. Louvain.

Lenz, T. 2003. *A New Version of the Gāndhārī Dharmapada and a Collection of Previous-birth Stories: British Library Kharoshṭhī Fragments 16+25*. Seattle.

Lenz, T. 2010. *Gandhāran Avadānas: British Library Kharoshṭhī Fragments 1–3 and 21 and Supplementary Fragments A-C*. Seattle.

Li R. (trans.). 1996. *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*. Berkeley.

Lüders, H. 1961. *Mathurā Inscriptions: Unpublished Papers*. Göttingen.

Malalasekera, G.P. 1937–38. *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. 2 vols. London.

Maraldo, J. 1986. "Hermeneutics and Historicity in the Study of Buddhism." *Eastern Buddhist* 19.1: 17–43.

Maraldo, J. 2004. "History." In R.E. Buswell (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, I: 332-–36. New York.

Martin, D. 1997. *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan Language Historical Works*. London.

Melzer, G. 2006. "A Copper Scroll Inscription from the Time of the Alchon Huns." In J.E. Braarvig (ed.), *Buddhist Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection*, III: 251–78. Oslo.

Nattier, J. 1991. *Once Upon a Future Time*. Berkeley.

Neelis, J. 2007. "Passages to India: Śaka and Kuṣāṇa Migrations in Historical Contexts." In D. Srinivasan (ed.), *On the Cusp of an Era: Art in the Pre-Kuṣāṇa World*, 55–94. Leiden.

Neelis, J. 2008. "Historical and Geographical Contexts for Avadānas in Kharoshṭhī Manuscripts." In R. Gombrich and C. Scherrer-Schaub (eds.), *Buddhist Studies*, 151–67. Delhi.

Neelis, J. 2011. *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia*. Leiden.

Norman, K.R. 1997. *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*. London.

Pollock, S. 2006. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. Berkeley.

Quintanilla, S.R. 2007. *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura, ca. 150 BCE – 100 CE*. Leiden.

Qvarnström, O. 2009. "Dharma in Jainism – A Preliminary Survey." In P. Olivelle (ed.), *Dharma: Studies in Its Semantic, Cultural and Religious History*, 177–88. Delhi [first published in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32.5–6 (2004) 599–610].

Rosenfield, J.M. 1967. *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*. Berkeley.

Salomon, R. 1998. *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in the Indo-Aryan Languages*. New York.

Salomon, R. 1999. *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments*. Seattle.

Salomon, R. 2002. "A Sanskrit Fragment Mentioning King Huviṣka as a Follower of the Mahāyāna." In J.E. Braarvig (ed.), *Buddhist Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection*, II: 255–67. Oslo.

Schopen, G. 2004. *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*. Honolulu.

Schopen, G. 2006. "A Well-Sanitized Shroud: Asceticism and Institutional Values in the Middle Period of Buddhist Monasticism." In P. Olivelle (ed.), *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, 315–47. New York.

Sims-Williams, N. 2004 (2008). "The Bactrian Inscription of Rabatak: A New Reading." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 18 [2004, publ. 2008]: 53–68.

Skilling, P. 2005. "Cutting across Categories: Relics in Pāli Texts, the *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra*, and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*." *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 8: 269–332.

Stein, M.A. (trans.). 1900. *Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*. 2 vols. Westminster.

Strong, J. 1983. *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*. Princeton.

Strong, J. 2001. *The Buddha: A Short Biography*. Oxford.

Strong, J. 2004. *Relics of the Buddha*. Princeton.

Trainor, K. 1997. *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition*. Cambridge.

van der Kuijp, L. 1996. "Tibetan Historiography." In J.I. Cabezon and R.R. Jackson (eds.), *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 39–56. Ithaca, NY.

Verardi, G. 1983. "The Kuṣāṇa Emperors as *Cakravartins*. Dynastic Art and Cults in India and Central Asia: History of a Theory, Clarifications and Refutations." *East and West* 33: 225–94.

von Hinüber, O. 1996. *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*. Berlin.

von Hinüber, O. 1998. *Entstehung und Aufbau der Jātaka-Sammlung: Studien zur Literatur des Theravāda-Buddhismus*, I. Stuttgart.

von Hinüber, O. 2006 (2008). "Hoary Past and Hazy Memory: On the History of Early Buddhist Texts." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29.2 [2006, publ. 2008]: 193–210.

Wallis, G. 2002. *Mediating the Power of Buddhas: Ritual in the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. Albany, NY.

Walters, Jonathan. 1998. *Finding Buddhists in Global History*. Washington, DC.

Walters, Jonathan. 2000. "Buddhist History: The Sri Lankan Pāli Vaṃsas and Their Commentary." In R. Inden, J. Walters, and D. Ali, *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practice in South Asia*, 99–164. Oxford.

Warder, A.K. 1972. *An Introduction to Indian Historiography*. Bombay.

History as Festival? A Reassessment of the Use of the Past and the Place of Historiography in Ancient Egyptian Thought

Thomas Schneider

In his book *Kant and the Platypus*, Umberto Eco (2000: 45–46) compares our universe of knowledge to a Roman columbarium, an immense graveyard of belief and intuition. Can we, he wonders, reckon with the world in some way by adapting to the constrictions of this columbarium? Or does it not happen that every so often the world obliges us to restructure the columbarium or even to choose an alternative, to adopt a new model of interpretation? This contribution intends to evaluate critically one of the well-entrenched ideas about ancient Egypt's sense and use of its past, one of the niches – to stay within Eco's imagery – of the Egyptological mind: "history as festival." But this concept was itself an attempt to overcome a trajectory of interpretation that Egyptology had inherited from the Classical tradition: the search for historiographical thinking. More fundamentally, the crucial problem underlying the debate has been the applicability of the term "historiography" to Egyptian and Near Eastern texts and its frequently vague, unreflected, and even contradictory use in scholarly literature. To make things more complex, in recent times the distinct opposition between a modern historiography of the ancient Near East with a claim to objectivity, and the ancient history-writing the biases and deficiencies of which can be ascertained by comparison with the modern reconstruction of the past, has been thoroughly shattered by claims that modern reconstruction and objectivism are illusory. It will therefore be essential first to outline the current state of the quest for historiography in ancient Near Eastern studies, then to revisit the concept that was to explain the absence of historiography in Egypt, and finally to

focus on a textual and societal milieu in which, as I will propose, a nucleus of Egyptian historiography can be situated.

The Elusiveness of Historiography

In 1944 Gerhard von Rad in famous remarks emphasized the novelty and exceptionality of Hebrew (and Greek) historiography in the context of the ancient Near East, and provided an intellectual explanation for this presumed fact (1966: 167):

> A striking inability to think historically in the sense defined above[1] is characteristic of the ancient Egyptians. Eminently conservative, eminently literate, they limited their reflections on the past to mere antiquarian details, and were incapable of building up wider pictures. Similarly the civilizations of Mesopotamia, despite the chequered history of this area, built up no ordered conception of history beyond documents of the kind mentioned above [chronicles, TS]. At the most one can speak only of an attempt to establish an intelligible sequence of historical events by means of lists. They lacked the power to meet the task of presenting the history of the nation in a unified and orderly form.

More recently, J.M. Alonso-Núñez (2007: 889) offered an assessment from the perspective of Classical scholarship, to the effect that

> fundamental differences exist between modern historiographical models and those found in the ancient Orient (Egypt, Hittites, Iran, Mesopotamia). There historiography was conceived of as a list of events and rulers. Oriental historiography was made obsolete by the Greeks and transformed into a presentation of events concerning all, not just certain individuals. Written on scrolls and designed for an audience, this new form of historiographical models is very different from ancient Oriental monumental inscriptions.

This statement dramatically misrepresents the varied evidence we possess from the ancient Near East (and the diversity of Greek texts, for that matter). But it is noteworthy for acknowledging, in marked contrast to von Rad, the existence of ancient Near Eastern historiography without, however, raising the question whether it might need more scrutiny to determine whether this term is meaningful at all in an ancient Near Eastern context. This is indeed the major obstacle in relevant ancient Near Eastern scholarship: a fundamental lack of clarity in definition when using the term "historiography" (Abusch et al. 2001).

Marc van de Mieroop (1999: 25–27) is among those few scholars who admit using the term "historiographic texts" with a certain reluctance, "as it assumes an intent by their writers of composing a version of their past, an intent which may not have been present at all."[2] Implicitly, he then adopts a fundamental division John van Seters had proposed "between 'commemorative records of events,' written

soon after their occurrence, and chronographic texts that were written for very different purposes – from purely utilitarian – establishing the sequence of year names according to which administrative texts were dated—to propagandistic, such as promoting the cult of a certain god." Van Seters had defined ancient Near Eastern historiography as "different kinds of literary works from antiquity that treat historical subjects or reflect historical concerns," and had focused on two contrasting types of historiography: (a) "the treatment of recent events from immediately accessible sources to offer accountability and memorialize the events for future generations," and (b) "the re-presentation of the remote past for the purpose of explaining and understanding the present in terms of origins and primary causes" (1995: 2433–2444). While subscribing to van Seters' classification in principle, van de Mieroop is cautious enough not to use controversial terms that obscure rather than elucidate the definition (such as "literary works," "historical subjects," or "historical concerns").

Donald Redford has made an attempt to overcome the "shoddy classification" he detects in the scholarly literature, such as the habit of subsuming under "historical texts" any texts that have to do with the past (Redford 1986: xiv; see also Eyre 1996). His definition of "history-writing" is:

> the telling of events involving or affecting human beings (not necessarily though usually in narrative form) which took place prior to the time of composition, the chief aim of which is to explain those events for the benefit, predilection, and satisfaction of contemporaries, and not for the enhancement of the writer's personal reputation. The form will be without artifice or metaphor, that is, it will not be drama, epic poetry, cult prescription or the like. The historian is attempting to interpret past events in that he either shows his readers how he (the reader) is personally affected and/or related to said events; or invites the reader vicariously to share and experience those events. And the reader can only share and experience those events if they are described and interpreted for him. (Redford 1986: xiv)

On this narrow definition, Redford concedes, "little of the vast quantity of written documents left behind by the ancient Egyptians qualifies as 'history-writing'," and he concludes, after listing possible exceptions: "The search for a form of Egyptian composition to which we could apply the term 'historiography' has thus come to an abrupt end: we cannot find one" (Redford 1986: xiv–xv). This negative result regarding distinct historiographic genres does not mean, to be sure, that the Egyptians had no regard for, or no consciousness of, their past, but that they "talked about and made use of the past in forms of writing and oral declaration much different from what we would classify as 'history'" (ibid., xv), as Redford demonstrates on another 330 pages with a meticulous collection of texts that chronicle kings and events of the past.[3]

The validity of Redford's attempt seems compromised by the attempt to find in Egypt a precursor to Classical and modern historiography and to exclude the vast majority of Egyptian texts for the very fact that they do not comply neatly with this western model of history-writing. A brief look at the documents grouped together

by him suffices to show that they are indeed taken from unrelated contexts and served very different purposes. The main categories accounted for are actual lists of kings of the past, annals comprising principal cultic and political events of specific regnal years, and administrative accounts following a daily roster – from the journal of necropolis workmen at Thebes to ships' logs and border protocols. Since these texts are taken from the divergent contexts of temples, tombs, administration, and schools, a chronographical interest is by no means apparent from the outset: king-lists reflected local cultic and offering traditions and the sequence of royal statues in the temple court; day-books served the legal and economic administration; annals, mentioning military achievements or building projects, proved official compliance with divine requests, whereas questions of historical cause and consequence were of no significance. Herodotus visualizes this difference in purpose in his famous encounter with the Egyptian priest whose simple list of 330 kings stands in stark contrast with the historian's intended analytical scrutiny. But could the selection be wrong? Are there textual traditions that are narrative and reflect on the past, while conforming to a model of historiography?

Before I pursue this question further, it may be instructive to point to a scholarly debate where the divergence of views on a text that Redford would not classify as historiography is most visible – the Sumerian King List. Piotr Michalowski has denied not only that the text has a historiographic purpose but also that it is in any way useful as a source for modern historiography: "It is at present impossible to produce a composite text of this composition which would reflect any historical 'reality' (…) Since the king list is not a reflection of real events but is, rather, a depiction of an *idea* of reality, the text should forever be banished from reconstruction of early Mesopotamian history" (1983: 240, 243). D.O. Edzard too writes: "The king list cannot be considered a historical primary source (1980–83: 81; my trans.). In contrast, J.-J. Glassner (2005: 98) sees the list as a prime achievement of early historiography:

> The Old Akkadian kings had recourse to the skills of professional scribes, to whom they entrusted the task of exploring the past and of manipulating memory in order to construct an ideological basis for their energetic but fragile power. Although the Chronicle of the Single Monarchy was the monument of a new-fledged power, still in formation but already writing its own history, a historiographical approach certainly governed its composition, because this was from the outset a rewriting. The chronicle offered the new monarchy (which would prove to be short-lived) a long past, which once formulated, that monarchy need only restore.

Similarly, Peter Panitschek (2008: 462–64) recognizes in the Sumerian King List a pioneering intellectual endeavor of "scientific" historiography, presenting a universal history of heavenly kingship in Mesopotamia based not on fiction but a meticulous use of (pseudo)historical data.

The range of judgments on whether or not such texts qualify as historiography is thus highly controversial and depends largely on our modern exegesis of the texts and their contextualization. In such a situation only a broad definition of "historiography" can be feasible.[4] Narrow definitions such as that given by Redford will make any

assessment of the wider issue of historiography too dependent on individual views and preconceptions, and susceptible to circular reasoning. The present volume seeks to explore the diversity of forms of history-writing in their cultural specificity rather than to identify precursors of Classical and modern historiography, and therefore recommends the adoption of a definition that can answer this quest. The definition used here is Johan Huizinga's classic formula according to which (written) history "is the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past" (1936: 9).[5] This working definition is fortunate for several reasons.

First, speaking of the "intellectual form" does not exclude texts from being considered here simply because they are narrative. It is not clear why texts in an epic, poetic, or legal form could a priori not be historiographic even if they narrate, explain, and judge historical events. A random search provides ample evidence for epic historiography (for instance, an Occitan epic of the First Crusade [Sweetenham and Paterson 2003]) or poetic historiography (for example, in medieval China [Kern 2004] or nineteenth-century Britain [Bernstein 2007]), and pertinent texts of the ancient Near East, such as lamentations, have indeed been addressed from this point of view (by Mitchell 2008, among others). The preamble to Hittite state contracts is historiographic in nature.[6] It is equally clear that historiography can well be oral (as, for example, in South African praise songs) or pictorial (as in modern documentaries), and these categories have been acknowledged for ancient Near Eastern material such as historical legends in the Old Testament or pictorial cycles of past events in Sumer and Assyria.[7]

Second, speaking of "rendering account" leaves more leeway for the degree and explicitness of explanation, of historiographic discussion, and the diversity of presentation and style integral to a given intellectual form. This is equally true for modern examples; it suffices here to contrast Hellmut Diwald's (1969) and Golo Mann's (1971) books on Wallenstein.

Third, speaking of the "past" is a critical part of the definition. As is visible in van Seters' proposal, texts seem to deal fundamentally with either the remote or the recent past, in the latter case mostly with political and military events of the reign of the very ruler who commissioned the monument carrying the text for the purposes of accountability and commemoration. It is doubtful that such accounts of recent events could be classified as "the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past" because those events could not be seen in their historical consequences; rather, they create a primary source that could potentially infuse later views of the past. Political and religious accountability of events "close to the present" and their justification for the future are distinct from rendering account of a past that is already acknowledged for its impact on the present.[8]

History as Festival

One of few attempts to explain the absence in ancient Egypt of historiography on such a strict definition was made by Erik Hornung who, in an influential study published in 1966 and republished in 1989, coined the notion of "Geschichte als

Fest" for the ancient Egyptian sense of history (Hornung 1966: pt. I; 1989: 147–63). Rather than merely conceding the lack of historiography, he understood it as the result of an allegedly antihistoric or ahistoric ideology of Egyptian kingship. According to his view, "history" was a cultic event performed by the king in which the cosmic order was reiterated and perpetuated. Accounts of military and other royal achievements would therefore highlight the ritual function of the Egyptian king to the detriment of how kingship was realized by historical individuals. This understanding emphasizes the role itself over the individual, and invariability over change, an understanding which, according to Hornung, was central to Egypt's view of history and its historical tradition:

> In this perspective, history realizes itself as a fixed ritual whose textbook are the annals. In the annals, history is preserved as past, present, and future events; they show, and at the same time prescribe, what has happened, happens, and is to happen over and over again … The events preserved here can be assigned to a limited number of typical categories … Not alone the annals but Egyptian official historical tradition as a whole are shaped by this typology of events which is selective and characterized by repetitiveness … In this cultic drama of history, the only actual protagonists are the pharaoh and the "enemies."[9]

It is essential here to be precise about Hornung's intention as the term "Geschichte als Fest" has been inaccurately translated into English in the 1992 translation (ch. 8, 147–64). The phrase is rendered there as "history as celebration" which reduces the concept to celebrating and disregards the essential issue of the ritual and festive enactment of events. Beyond doubt, a proper translation can only be "history as festival," as is indeed the rendering given by Anthony Spalinger when reusing this "felicitous phrase" in a study of Egyptian religion.[10]

Referring to Hornung's notion of "history as festival" again as a very fortuitous formula, Jan Assmann reemphasized this understanding in 2006, speaking of the Egyptian approach as a strategy to cope with the imponderabilities of the present. The German term he uses – *Gegenwartsbewältigung* – audaciously recasts the notion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the German efforts to cope with their Nazi past) to fit the Egyptian case. According to Assmann, the cultic form given to the Egyptian year with its unceasing sequence of temple rituals and festivals was to counter the fear of rupture and change in the cultural continuum. Each day would have been seen as a part of the sacred order that had to be preserved, observed, and performed. To quote Assmann, "What happened in spite of this – *which we call 'history'* [my emphasis] – had to comply with this framework." This primary strategy of the Egyptians of coping with the present would, according to Assmann, explain the absence of true retrospective reconstructions of their past. Assmann's adoption of Hornung's classic view appears slightly less ahistoric than Hornung's. His reference to imponderabilities that needed to be mastered seems to suggest that a historical reality does hide even behind the ritual scenes. In order to reach a critical assessment of the hypothesis, it is essential here to

single out the two types of sources Hornung used in order to draw out what he regarded as Egypt's "official view of history" (1966: pt. I):

1. depictions of the king defeating his enemies in warfare; "those depictions do not display historical events but cultic actions; what they could reveal in terms of historic information has to be inferred by the historian, from case to case, with caution and due respect to Egypt's *alien sense of history*" [my emphasis];
2. annals such as the *Palermo Stone* (a stone slab now in Palermo with a list of Egyptian kings and their regnal years, mentioning the height of the annual Nile inundation and other annual "events") where the nature of the recorded royal deeds would illustrate what kind of historical events were essential to "official Egypt" and worth being passed on. Such events are few and repetitive: the manufacture of statues, the building of sanctuaries, the important festivals, the defeating of enemies, and ritual hunting.

Pithy and authoritative though this hypothesis has been, it is based on three fundamental methodological parameters whose validity needs to be questioned:

1. Hornung's first parameter is the highly specific selection of sources. Both the smiting the enemy scenes and the annals come from Egyptian temples. As documents from a cultic context they reflect, first and foremost, a cultic agenda. It is not clear why these texts should inform us about the "Egyptian" sense of history. What they convey is a set of principles guiding the conduct of Egypt's primary political institution, the monarchy. Even explicit annals such as those of Thutmose III are a document of religious accountability, adjusted from the records of a campaign diary. At the same time, the contents and purposes of these texts are much more diverse than postulated by Hornung; hence it is no longer feasible to speak of an annalistic tradition as a uniform genre with one basic agenda.[11] The sources operate in conjunction with the festive display and affirmation of royal ideology, a "cultural pattern" publicly embodied by the current "ruler in festival" ("der Herrscher im Fest," Roth 2006: 236–38; 2008). In no case do they convey to us how the king, the court, state administration, the military, or even the priesthood viewed and judged the actual past.
2. The second parameter of Hornung's hypothesis is a notion of "history" that seems mistaken by any current definition. With regard to the sources he selects, Hornung argues (1992: 152–53) that "the records of historical events have three components: the events themselves …, a political aim that determines particular accents; and an underlying sense of history that provides a fundamental pattern for rendering the events. With this pattern, all those involved play set roles much as they would in a religious drama"; or, as Hermann Schlögl formulates it, "the king celebrated history as a festive event" (2003: 20; my trans.). It is essential to state that what Hornung here labels "history" is entirely different from modern historiography which understands history as later

reconstructions, perceptions, or narratives of the past. In contrast, where the examples adduced for the concept of "history as festival" are not altogether devoid of any historical dimension, they consist of political actions of a given Egyptian king that were portrayed in a ritual context by the Egyptians but might not be recognized as a meaningful part of the past, hence history, by a modern historian. Political events are not history, nor does their presentation display anything beyond a sense of political ideology. Hornung does not explore whether historical recollections by ancient Egyptians themselves equally center on the ritual role of past kings so as to confirm the postulated ritual sense of history (which they do not: see below). Therefore, these sources cannot be used to infer a sense of "official" history or historical consciousness.

3. The third parameter is the postulate, based on the assumption of the uniformity of Egyptian culture, that some consistent overarching principles (such as "history as festival") remained valid in this culture throughout time (Hornung's examples span several millennia). In a study of Egypt's concepts and uses of the past, John Baines has recently refuted widespread assumptions that the evidence is homogeneous and ideologically consistent, emphasizing instead its diversity.[12] While, to give one example, the scene on the *Narmer Palette* depicting the king smiting an enemy (circa 3000 BCE) and the scene at the temple of Esna of the Roman emperor Trajan smiting enemies (circa 100 CE) are formally identical, the entirely different political and religious contexts suggest different readings and interpretations of the scene by the respective (and entirely different) elites.

The same inherently problematic merging of separate contexts and notions underlies Assmann's chapter on "Time and History in Early Cultures," mentioned before. The ritual and festival calendar of the Egyptian year was enacted in the context of the temple – in theory by the king in his function as high priest. Assmann's claim to the effect that "what happened in spite of this – which we call 'history' – had to comply with this framework," is not generally true, and where it is, only when and if it was represented according to the regulations (the decorum [Baines 2007: 201]) that applied to its cultic display. It may be helpful to illustrate both the claim to "history as festival" and the criticism presented here with a precise example. Anticipating arguments in the next paragraph that rely on texts and artefacts from one exemplary reign, that of Horemheb, I will use here evidence from the same king's rock temple at Gebel el-Silsila in Upper Egypt, approximately 65 km to the north of Aswan (Smith 1999; republished by Thiem 2000). This sanctuary is consecrated to seven deities whose statues are placed at its rear wall (Amun, Mut, Khonsu, Sobek, Thoeris, Thoth, and interestingly, the deified Horemheb himself), but another 75 deities are represented and invoked in the other parts of the sanctuary. The images display Horemheb in ritual actions in front of gods and goddesses. They include the following two tableaus that Hornung would classify as "history as festival."

The theme of the sanctuary is the righteous rule of Horemheb who in figure 7.1 (c) is depicted as nursing at the breasts of the goddess Thoeris. In (a), Egyptian

(a)

(b)

(c)
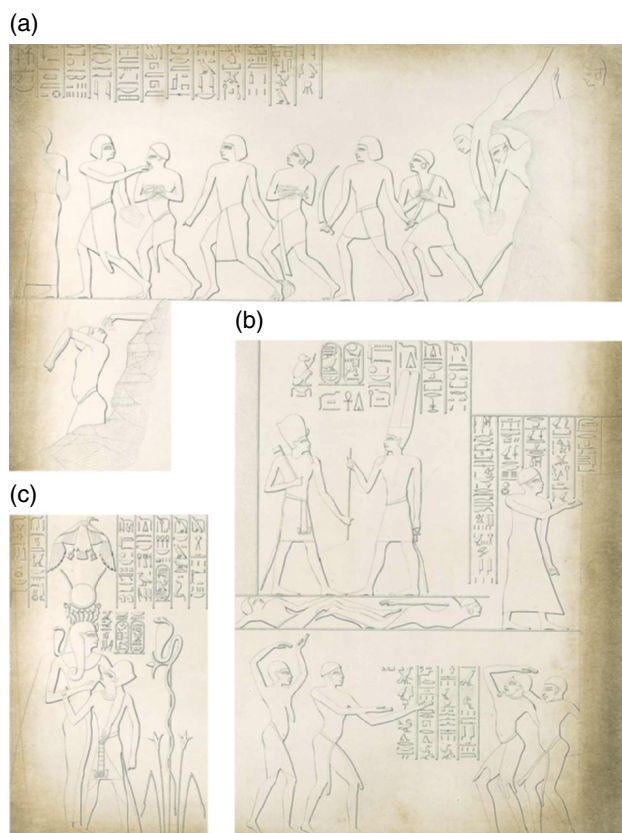
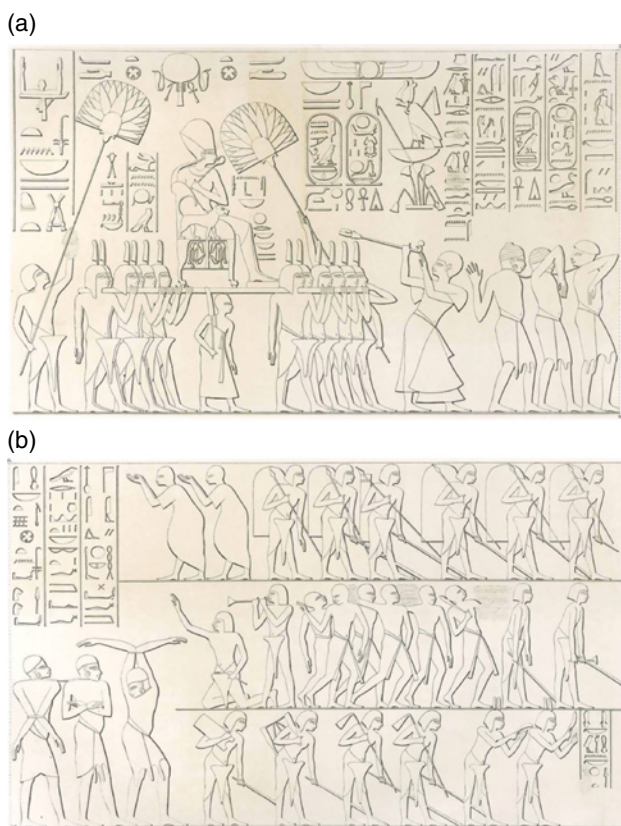**Figure 7.1** Horemheb's divine commission to rule Nubia. From his rock temple at Gebel el-Silsile. Carl Richard Lepsius, Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien. Abtheilung III. Band VI. Berlin 1849. Tafel 120; courtesy of the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle.

soldiers lead off Nubian prisoners while the legend explains: "Hail to you, King of Egypt, Sun of the 9 Bows [the enemies of Egypt], your great fame is in the land of Nubia and your war cry is in their places. It is your power, O good ruler, which has made the foreign lands into heaps of corpses. The pharaoh is the light (of the world)." In (b) the god Amun-Re passes a scepter to Horemheb, saying: "I have given you bravery against the South and victory over the North"; both [Amun-Re and Horemheb] are depicted as trampling down an Asiatic and Nubian prisoner. To the right and below that scene, Nubian representatives are shown paying worship to Horemheb. The text suggests that this is a depiction of the ideological purpose of Egyptian kingship, maintaining control over the chaotic regions outside Egypt. The same use of this theme to emphasize Horemheb's kingship is apparent in a second panel (figure 7.2) where in the upper register the king is shown in a scene of triumph with Nubian prisoners. The text states that the king and "bodily son of Re" has brought home the "princes of wretched Nubia" but that the

(a)

(b)

Figure 7.2   Horemheb's triumph over Nubians from his rock temple at Gebel el-Silsile. Carl Richard Lepsius, Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien. Abtheilung III. Band VI. Berlin 1849. Tafel 121; courtesy of the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle.

campaigning and capturing was done "according to what Amun had ordered him to do." No Nubian campaign is known from Horemheb's reign, and it is uncertain whether a possible Nubian campaign under Tutankhamun, whose commander-in-chief Horemheb was, was appropriated by the latter when he was king himself.[13] But even if a campaign could be inferred from these reliefs, their purpose was not to describe a historical event but to show the king's compliance with the role in which he was invested by Amun: the maintenance of order (a religious theme). The king thus does not enact here history as a festival but shows that he is able to act politically and that he is accountable for his actions to Amun.

History as History: A Look at Horemheb

The hypothesis of a pervasive concept of "history as festival" proposes an interpretive model for specific Egyptian texts and depictions. At the same time, it imposes narrow constraints on the ancient evidence. On its terms, we would expect official documents to be in line with ritual arguing ("what happened in spite of this – which

we call *history* – had to comply with this framework" [see p. 122]) and to lack historical reasoning or justification. As will be demonstrated with a precise historical example, this is not the case, and additional evidence is apt to support the general validity of this claim. As a matter of fact, a distinct awareness of the past and deliberate responses to it are indeed recorded in official documents, even those displayed in a ritual context. This fact is not denied by advocates of the hypothesis of history as festival but ascribed to a tendency of Egyptian intellectual thinking to become, in particular during the New Kingdom, more susceptible to reality, a phenomenon Jan Assmann labels "der Einbruch der Geschichte" ("the irruption of history").[14]

John Baines, in turn, does not regard this latter phenomenon as a shift in historical consciousness but as a mere change in decorum, the possibility to display certain themes and motifs more openly in previously restricted contexts (2007: 191). The debate underscores that we need to be aware of the extent to which modern discussions are influenced by our limited knowledge of the Egyptian past, the ancient Egyptians' actual perception of their past, and the decorum regulating official display, and by the lack of evidence from crucial areas of interest, in particular state archives (see below).

The territory chosen for the intended case study is small so as to allow for scrutiny: it is the reign of Horemheb, a time of fourteen years at the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth dynasty (1316–1302 BCE). Before presenting evidence that will allow us to assess Horemheb's view of the past, it is important to sketch briefly the immediate prehistory of Horemheb's reign as the backdrop of his political agenda.[15] He was the first king after the religious revolution of Amarna in which Amenophis IV Akhenaten had attempted to install a far-reaching monotheism, the belief in Aten. Centered on a new demythologized doctrine of the world, it implemented a new form of cult, art, and religious practice in the new sacred residence of Akhetaten. After the failure of Amarna, a return to tradition was engineered, but Akhenaten's memory was only obliterated and the king spoken of as the "criminal of Amarna" in the early nineteenth dynasty. From the king-lists commissioned by this dynasty, the Amarna rulers were eliminated so that Horemheb appears as the direct successor to Amenophis III who died 35 years before Horemheb's coronation.[16] By contrast, the chronographic tradition preserved by the Egypto-Greek first historian of Egypt, Manetho, reveals, through a complete list of eighteenth-dynasty rulers including all Amarna kings prior to Horemheb,[17] that this was but one of several possible Egyptian retrospectives.

While Horemheb has been credited with a cautious policy of balance between revolution and tradition, it certainly falls short of historical reality to see his reign as a mere reaction to the incident of Amarna. Our understanding of Horemheb's view of the past depends on how we ourselves reconstruct and understand that past.[18] Any answer to the question of why Atenism came about is inextricably linked to what mechanisms we consider to be at work in Egyptian history, and how political decisions were reached. Conventionally, Akhenaten's revolution was seen as an attempt to confine the overwhelming political and economic influence of the clergy of Amun. The main purpose of the revolution would have been political, with Akhenaten acting as the protagonist

of a group concerned about the decreasing resources and possibilities of royal influence. And indeed, Akhenaten himself did assume some of the divine functions of Amun after the latter's cult had been halted. In a second scenario, the main impetus of the revolution would have been intellectual. It has been proposed that Akhenaten responded to a crisis in cognition (in some scholars' view, this crisis was fueled by the impact of the empire Egypt had acquired since the fifteenth century BCE) that expressed itself in a debate about how the visible and invisible world could be understood; accordingly, in this scenario Akhenaten's individuality is seen as the driving force behind the Amarna revolution. A third scenario credits external factors with triggering this revolution. It emphasizes how radically the revolution departed from inherited tradition, how massively it encroached on existing privileges, and what an extraordinary burden it imposed on the finances of the state. Only a momentous event could have discredited the religion of Amun and authorized Akhenaten to implement Atenism, and we could be right in identifying this event with the epidemic that ravaged the ancient Near East in the second half of the fourteenth century. This context would explain the 730 statues of Sakhmet, Amun's consort and goddess of plague and pestilence, erected by Akhenaten's father, and the emergence of the Syrian weather god, a savior from pestilence, as a new state god of Egypt in the immediate aftermath of the Amarna period. Giving Akhenaten unprecedented political support to abolish tradition may have been seen as an ultimate means to overcome the plague, while the king's failure would have sealed both his own fate and that of his religion.

Given such variety of possibilities and opinions, it becomes obvious that we can only explain the texts and memories if we succeed in establishing their correct correlation to the past. Did Horemheb just have to cope with the ashes of a maverick's failed revolution? Was his problem how to reconcile conflicting religious and political interests? Or was he expected to find the answer to an existential crisis in which his predecessors had failed? Whatever scenario we adopt, Horemheb's policies must have been informed by the past. In contrast to the idea of *history as a festival*, key sources here show the display of singular history, the use of history as an example and an argument, and the idea of sucessive (rather than ritually uniform) history that could even serve as a reference for time-counting.

Singular history: an unprecedented kingship

To be in agreement with Egyptian ideology and ritual, Horemheb would have had to be the physical son of a former king who would assume the role of the god Horus after his father's death. Horemheb, however, was a *homo novus* ("new man") who had risen in the military system to the rank of general-in-chief of the Egyptian army: a king by merit, not by descent (Murnane 1995: 188–91). He had himself elected as heir-apparent of Tutankhamun, and his private tomb at Saqqara, modeled on the template of a royal mortuary temple, gives vivid testimony to the resources he commanded and the royal prerogatives he claimed. The policy of reconciliation and religious balance visible in stelae inscriptions from this first private tomb shows his predominant role in

shaping the aftermath of the Amarna period even before he became king, and refuels the debate to what extent royal documents where the king is the main protagonist of events can be used for reconstructing Egypt's history (Helck 1994). A comprehensive text on Horemheb's accession to kingship, preserved on the back of a group statue of Horemheb and his wife Mutnodjmet, mentions two relevant strategies (*Urk.* IV: 2113–20; trans. Helck 1961: 404–7; Wolf 1971: 206–9): (1) the king credits the god of his native city, a local variety of Horus, with having chosen and elevated him to the kingship. This is described as a singular act of history after generations had passed – first, the god installs Horemheb as a regent, and later installs him as king, reflecting the ruler's actual historical career path. (2) The god Amun, patron of Egyptian statehood, is described as "joining in the praises" at the coronation ceremony and confirming Horemheb as the righteous ruler of Egypt, a passive stance which may be indicative of the inescapable approval by the priests of Amun of Horemheb's military position of power rather than their proactive support.[19] The coronation stele does not obscure the fact at all that Horemheb was a *homo novus* whose accession to kingship did not comply with traditional procedure. Of all the available options, that which would have brought historical exceptionality into agreement with accepted ideology was precisely not chosen but ideology is here *surpassed* by the divine choice of a leader fit to meet the unique challenges of a specific present.[20]

Formative history: reflecting on the past

While the precise process of political decision-making in Egypt is unknown, it is obvious that decisions would be based on an analysis of contemporary issues and their historical genesis. Allusions in a small number of texts from the New Kingdom indicate that this kind of historical reflection would reach back over about three generations. In the dedicatory inscription of her temple at *Speos Artemidos* in Middle Egypt, Hatshepsut (1479–1456 BCE) claims, maybe in the interest of contemporary religious politics, that the Hyksos (whose 15th dynasty ended in 1548) did not worship Re.[21] The boundary stelae of Akhenaten (1349–1332) mention "bad words" pronounced under the reigns of his predecessors, Amenophis II, Thutmose IV, and Amenophis III (1425–1349).[22] The historical prologue to the *Great Papyrus Harris*, a political testament authored by Ramses IV (1164–1156) for his predecessor Ramses III (1195–1164), reviews the history of internal conflict before the establishment of the twentieth dynasty (1214–1195).[23] This process must have affected and involved factions with diverging interests, although the texts that are preserved from a cultic context curtail this in favor of the king's preeminence.

It is, however, possible to infer missing evidence indirectly, from documents of Horemheb's contemporary on the Hittite side, Mursili II. In the historical prologue of his *Plague Prayers*, the latter reflected on the historical origin of the epidemic that was ravaging the ancient Near East and had killed his predecessor on the throne, Shuppiluliuma, and his heir-apparent, Arnuwanda (Chavalas 2006:

264–65). He perceived the reason for such divine punishment in a breach of a treaty concluded between Egypt and the people of Shattuwaza in the earlier fourteenth century. Together with annalistic texts such as the *Manly Deeds of Shuppiluliuma* and the *Annals of Mursili II*, this prologue is seen as a climax in Hittite historiography.[24] It is evident that on the Egyptian side similar debates must have taken place; they can in fact be inferred from a literary reflection of the topic, a text about how the destruction of humankind was prevented by Seth-Baal, the protector from pestilence, probably in the reign of Horemheb, and by Horemheb's worship of that god (see also below). An intense exchange of letters such as the Amarna letters or the correspondence preparing the diplomatic marriages and the peace treaty under Ramses II has not been preserved from Horemheb's reign, but a recently restituted Hittite text mentions an exchange of notes between Murshili II and Horemheb relating to the political situation in Syria.[25]

Distinct history: the past as argument

In a legal text decreed by Horemheb (the Horemheb decree or edict),[26] a large number of legal measures are enumerated which are so specific in nature that they must be seen as enactments to stamp out concrete abuses and reinstall political and social stability. They relate to the unlawful requisitioning of boats and slaves, the theft of cattle hides, the illegal taxation of private farmland and fraud in assessing lawful taxes, and the extortion of local mayors by officials organizing the king's annual visit to the Opet festival during the journey from Memphis to Thebes and back. Other paragraphs deal with the regulation of the local courts of justice, the personnel of the royal harem and other state employees, and the protocol at court. This is no illustration of history as a festival either; the edict is a political response to concrete nuisances that had their historical causes. It is noteworthy in this context that the decree contains a precise historical reference to an administrative precedent set under Thutmose III (1479–1425), 250 years prior to Horemheb:[27]

> Now as for this other deed of wrong-doing, the occurrence of which was [heard] throughout the land. [When the agents] of the Queen's house and the table-scribes of the harem go behind the mayors and oppress them, and seek out the contribution for the northward and southward journeys, (as) one sought it from the mayors in the time of king Thutmosis III. Now, to him belonged the sailing north and south which they have exacted. Now since [the king] Thutmosis III went and [sailed north and south] [each] year [at the Opet-festival] on (his) journey to Thebes; and the [agent]s of the harem requested of the mayors, saying – "Give the contribution for the missing journey". Now, Pharaoh (may he live, be prosperous and healthy!) made the journey to the Opet-festival each year without fail, and one provided for Pharaoh (may he live, be prosperous and healthy!), [as every boat which was moored was under the authority of the agents and the table-scribes] of the harem. One goes seeking for [the contribution of the mayors], in order to make a thorough preparation. Who is he who goes back later on, in order to look for a contribution from them?[28]

Several elements of this passage deserve specific attention with respect to Assmann's claim that Egypt's unceasing sequence of temple rituals and festivals was to counter the fear of rupture and change, and that "what happened in spite of this – which we call 'history' – had to comply with this framework." First, the recollection clearly states that even the purportedly unceasing and unchanging cultic sphere (here exemplified by the Opet festival) had a history. Second, this history was visibly accounted for over many centuries and deliberately used as an argument by Horemheb. Third, the "official view of history" evidently embraced "what happened in spite of this" and did not necessarily withhold it. A clear awareness of the horizon of the past as evidenced here is also attested in Horemheb's restoration of monuments of Thutmose III and of the burial of Thutmose IV in the Valley of the Kings.[29]

Successive history: counting the past

Two years after Horemheb's death, the first major king of the nineteenth dynasty, Seti I, shows in his name the allegiance to a new patron of Egyptian kingship, called Seth. At the same time, the four divisions of the Ramesside army came to be named after a new canonical set of four gods of statehood: Amun, Re, Ptah, and Seth. The god Seth in question was the Syrian weather god Baal who was adopted into the Egyptian pantheon as patron of a new military form of kingship. This new aspect of state religion was established, as we now know, by Horemheb who seems to have justified the god's new status through a literary work underscoring Egypt's salvation by Seth-Baal (Schneider 2003b, 2011–12) and who probably celebrated the 400th anniversary of the god's "reign" in Egypt, that is, the genuine establishment of his worship. This celebration can be inferred from the so-called 400-year-stele from the reign of Ramses II which refers to the era of 400 years in l. 7:[30] "Regnal year 400, 4th month of the Shemu-season, 4th day of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Seth-whose-might-is-big." While the stele was erected "to elevate the fame of the father of his fathers (that is, of Seth) [and] of the (late) king Seti (I)," the lunette, referring to the kings Ramses I and Seti I only as "viziers," flashes back to the final years of the reign of Horemheb.[31] The date proposes, at least for the area of the temple at Piramesse-Auaris, where the stele was set up, an era-counting that is hardly known otherwise in Egypt.[32] Horemheb's interest in the local cult is archaeologically attested, as is the existence of a Seth-Baal cult at the time to which the era-date points, around 1700 (Schneider 2008a: 295–98).

Rather than denying the Egyptians any historical awareness and sense of responsibility (as Hellmut Brunner wanted it),[33] it seems more appropriate to credit them with a high degree of reflection on past history and its potential implications for the future. Eberhard Otto suggested this as early as 1953, in a lucid statement precisely on Horemheb:

> Horemheb, first and foremost a military officer, recognizes the necessity to detach kingship from its old attachment to the south and to move, in the interest of politics, the country's focus to that part where Egypt's existence would be determined: Lower

Egypt. It was his to decide whether Egypt should quit the circle of Mediterranean countries and become a state of Africa, closely tied to its Nubian province, or whether it should try to maintain its place among the great powers of the Near East. In the former case, Egyptian culture would have become, beyond any doubt, a strange cultural curiosity of African-Egyptian mixture, comparable to the later Ethiopian empire in the south. Only in the latter case was it possible to preserve, if on a way fraught with toil and conflict, the connection with the Mediterranean world and, in the long term, with the emerging western culture. As a matter of course, neither Horemheb nor one of his contemporaries can be assumed to have deliberately considered such an alternative. But the historian must be permitted, with his consciousness, to demonstrate, at the turning-points of history, how a decision, taken for whatever reasons, could direct the course of history for centuries to come. (Otto 1958: 172; my trans.)

The Two Bodies of the King

The evidence provided in the previous section shows unequivocally that, apart from the terminological problem of labeling political events as "history," royal documents do not fully conform to the requirements of the hypothesis of "history as festival." History is clearly seen as potentially unique and distinctive, as a reference and argument for the present. Horemheb had a clear understanding of his place in history, and he engineered new policies in order to overcome failures of the past and problems of the present. In spite of the fact that the sources were placed in a temple context, they are anything but ritual in the sense that they would reiterate continuity and eschew change. Quite to the contrary, they display royal intervention and political innovation as inevitable for maintaining Egypt's stability. They do not obscure historical distinctiveness, be it in the past or the present.

Beyond the case study of Horemheb, doubts about the purported subordination of political (and only potentially historical) activities to ritual thinking arise where historical singularities are mentioned, or where specific individuals of the past, outstanding events, and cultural phenomena such as artistic styles and works of literature served as points of reference and models for later times.[34] The idea, common among Egyptologists, of the "ahistoric" nature of Egyptian civilization reflects less an actual Egyptian concept than modern bias prompted by the fact that the overwhelming majority of preserved Egyptian sources were produced for a cultic context. As a result of changes in decorum, they may have become more amenable to the display of noncultic elements, but this does not alter in substance their main purpose and function. Documents relating to the transactions of the court, of state and military administration, or the presumably extensive correspondence with foreign powers are practically all entirely lost; so are the main capitals of the second millennium, Itjtawi (south of Memphis), Memphis, and Piramesse. It is clear that those millions of documents would give us a different view of the political process and, for that matter, of prevailing views of history outside the cultic framework.

It may be helpful here to point to the twofold nature of the Egyptian king. According to Egyptian doctrine, kingship was established as the ideal form of government, best suited and commissioned to maintain the order of the world such as it was created in the beginning by the gods. This theology promised Egypt a history of salvation as long as its kings justly pursued this overarching goal in their different fields of action. Mortal by nature, but selected by the gods, the kings of the second millennium claimed divine features during their lifetime and were deified at death. Simultaneously, the king was both the political/military leader and (in theory) the only priest of Egypt. The fiction of two simultaneously acting bodies of the king is upheld throughout the texts: the king performed the daily cult in all temples of Egypt (although in practice, this was delegated to priests), and the king theoretically led all the military campaigns (even where we can prove that he did not physically participate). Cult and politics were implemented by the king as two concurrent and equal instruments of power. The most vivid illustration of this synchronous role is on the exterior and interior side of temple walls, where the king fights historically confirmed battles on the outer side while he is shown presenting offerings and libations to the gods on the inner side.

I propose here to apply, in a modified way, a term borrowed from a seminal contribution to medieval studies. In *The King's Two Bodies* (1957), Ernst Kantorowicz revolutionized the understanding of medieval political theology. The notion refers to the physical, mortal body of the king on the one hand and, on the other, his spiritual body, the divine office that transcended his earthly existence. In our present context, this seems to me a useful label to emphasize the two simultaneous presences of the Egyptian king, his personal presence as the king of rituals and his equally bodily presence as the king of politics. While the ritual functions were strictly regulated and standardized, this does not apply to the field of political activities, where the king had significant leeway in responding to the past. Overall, it seems crucial to distinguish between different areas of cultural expression and not to infer (as Spalinger 1997 does, relying on Assmann) a "rise in historical consciousness" and a "mental transformation of Pharaonic Egypt" from sources that reflect a highly specific segment of Egyptian culture and that are preserved in a dramatically larger proportion than evidence that would be able to balance this bias.

Stories about the Past: The Place of Historiography

The concept of "history as festival" can thus be refuted because the sources it is based upon do not deal with history and because they are taken from a specific context that is not representative for perceptions of history. Yet the verdict still holds that while there are various forms of referencing and using the past in the context of Egyptian kingship, the more particular genre of history-writing is hardly represented. The few historical retrospectives (such as that in the *Papyrus Harris*)[35] integrate negative events of the past in a pattern that emphasizes the new king's ability to overcome chaos, or have dynastic history legitimized by myth (Schneider 1998).

If we widen our horizon to cultural milieus beyond the court, however, we find texts that can well be seen as nuclei of historiography.

This approach is supported by a comparative look at historiographic texts from Mesopotamia that were not written at the court but by literati with a different agenda. The Babylonian Chronicle Series (Chavalas 2006: 408–426), to give but one example, was based by their priestly authors on astronomical diaries and covered the time from 747 to the third century BCE. It is more objective on state issues and acknowledges military defeats. This made A.K. Grayson remark: "Can we then conclude that these documents are the product of a sincere desire to keep a brief and accurate record of Babylonian history for its own sake?"[36]

The Ramesside Period, at the transition to which Horemheb ruled, witnessed the emergence of the new literary genre of *historical tales*, focusing on military virtue and achievement in warfare. Narratives preserved in writing from the century after Horemheb's reign are inspired by military events of the eighteenth dynasty whose last king he was: the *Quarrel of Apophis and Seqenenre*, the *Capture of Joppa*, and the *Tale of the Prince Threatened by Three Fates* (Spalinger 2010). This specific genre of narratives about the past continued to flourish in the first millennium when tales about warriors of the past reached their climax in the Demotic *Epics of the Petubastis Cycle*. Episodes preserved in Demotic and Greek also preserve themes of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, suggesting the existence of a longer oral tradition or the later fabrication of pseudohistoric tales around famous names of the past.[37] These narratives are behind many of the episodes in Greek historians of Egypt and especially Manetho, Egypt's third-century chronographer, whereas the "king of the rituals" is conspicuously absent. To judge by the main concerns of those texts – military victory and triumph, the art of war, the bravery and prowess of exemplary warriors, and the ethos of warfare – they likely originated within the Egyptian military system. Egypt's eighteenth dynasty was the first to maintain a standing army which from the fourteenth century offered a new career path and became a major factor of political and social power apart from the priesthoods and state administration (Gundlach and Vogel 2009).

The best proof of the impact of this new structure in the state is Horemheb himself who owed his kingship to his military position and could be called the first of a number of "military emperors" in Egypt. Tales about military accomplishments fostered identity and offered entertainment to Egypt's new military class. They not only originated in a social environment outside the royal court, they were also written in the Late Egyptian and Demotic vernaculars.[38] Horemheb himself may be at the center of a tale preserved in Manetho and is most likely adored as a hero on his chariot in a love song of the 20th dynasty.[39]

It is essential here to understand that those texts that mirrored the past even if they did not describe and analyze it, did not have to comply with the principles regulating official texts of the court or ritual texts of the temples. Despite the tendency, entrenched among scholars, to speak about *Egypt's* sense of the past and to infer it from diverse Egyptian sources, we need to keep in mind that priesthoods, the military, and the political factions within the elite of state observed different

professional codes and must have cherished different traditions and views of the past.[40] The case of military tales about the past, bound to a system of values and memories that differed from those of the king, gives us a possible clue as to why a proper genre of historiography was never developed in a royal context. Politics happened under the auspices of the gods who had to approve and legitimize political decisions; in turn, political and military events were presented to them in documents of accountability in a temple context. Politics lacking the gods' approval resulted in the gods revoking Egypt's salvation. This is portrayed in a drastic manner in Tutankhamen's restoration stele with a view to Amarna, at a time when Horemheb was the effective regent of Egypt and therefore likely the mind behind the text:

> Now when his majesty appeared as king, the temples of the gods and goddesses from Elephantine [down] to the marshes of the Delta [had … and] fallen into neglect. Their shrines had become desolate, had become mounds overgrown with [weeds]. Their sanctuaries were as if they had never been. Their halls were a footpath. The land was topsy-turvy and the gods turned their backs upon this land. If [the army was] sent to Syria to extend the frontiers of Egypt, no success of theirs came at all. If one prayed to a god to seek counsel from him, he would never come [at all]. If one made supplication to a goddess similarly, she would never come at all. (Pritchard 1969: 251)[41]

The belief that the true forces behind history were the gods was central to Egyptian kingship – Horemheb himself ascribed his kingship to a choice made by his native god and Amun for the sake of Egypt's salvation. In the decades following his reign, oracles were to become the prevailing form of how political decisions were reached, while after the New Kingdom, a new theology of kingship elevated Amun to the true "king of Egypt" and reclassified the Egyptian king as the god's mere priest and servant. From this perspective, and in comparison with the military tales about the past produced by a separate segment of society, I suggest to explain the absence of official historiography in ancient Egypt as a consequence of theological dependency. Assmann's postulate of an obsessive "coping with the imponderabilities of the present" – the attempt to make history appear without change and rupture – does not explain this absence. In turn, the king's dependency on the gods as the true engineers of history might well account for it. Writing history inevitably implies assessment, criticism, and dissent. In a belief system that attributed to the Egyptian gods all power and authority *over* the course of Egypt's history, would writing the history of Egypt not have been virtually impossible precisely because it required the possibility to criticize them?

    Such diversity of ancient agendas and ways to perceive the past should then also inform modern scholarship on ancient history-writing. As Reinhard Bernbeck has put it (2005: 116): "Any past topic, whether a political system, gender relations, or a period as a whole, was certainly seen by diverse people *in the past* in multiple ways. If we wish to depict the past not as a wishful dream but as an unknowable world inhabited and acted upon by people with different interests, we should recount it from several different perspectives at the same time and abandon the harmonious bourgeois perspectives of the individual onlooker."

Abbreviations

KRI   K.A. Kitchen. *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical.* 8 vols. Oxford, 1975–1990.

RITA   K.A. Kitchen. *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated.* Oxford, 1993–.

RITANC   K.A. Kitchen. *Ramesside Inscriptions: Translated and Annotated. Notes and Comments.* Multiple vols. Oxford, 1992–.

LÄ   *Lexikon der Ägyptologie.* 7 vols. Wiesbaden, 1975–1992.

Urk.   *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums.* Abteilung I–VIII. Leipzig, 1903–1988.

Notes

1   The reference is to 166 n. 3: "A historical sense is a particular form of causational thinking, applied in practice to a broad succession of political events."

2   The term "historiographic texts" is also used in the sense of "texts amenable to historiographic interpretation," as in a famous essay by Mario Liverani (1973).

3   In the same vein, Gozzoli (2006: 2) calls "history writing in a 'Western form'" "one of the major absentees in ancient Egypt."

4   For a similar debate on the nature of medieval historiography, see Spiegel 1997: esp. ch. 6 on "Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historiography."

5   A comprehensive approach based on Huizinga's definition is also adopted by Hallo 2010a: 432; 2010b: 420–21.

6   I mention as examples the historical prologues to the Proclamation of Telipinu (Chavalas 2006: 229–233), to state treaties (e.g., the treaty with Shattiwaza, Chavalas, 242–43), or to the plague prayers of Murshili (Chavalas, 264–65).

7   Oral historiography: e.g., the praise poetry of Zulu kings includes information on the king's achievements, lineage, and relationship with his subjects: Brown 1997; Vail and White 1991: ch. 5 ("Swazi Royal Praises: The Invention of Tradition," 155–197). "Pictorial Historiography": Feldges 2008: ch. 3. Wahl 1997 provides a comprehensive account of the history of research on oral precursors of narrative (also historiographic) texts in the Old Testament. Pictorial cycles in Sumer and Assyria: Hallo 2010c; Kaelin 1999.

8   For definitions of respective time frames, see Schulz 1992: esp. chs. 4–5.

9   Hornung 1989: 158–59, 160. I have chosen to translate the original text myself rather than using the published English translation which is not always sufficiently accurate (Hornung 1992: 159, 162).

10   Spalinger (1998: 248–49): "Assmann himself is at pains to emphasize the point that by the New Kingdom and later, the architecture of the temple had become limited to what can only be described as 'Festarchitektur.' Hence he added that this implies that the procession festivals had risen to an enormous importance in the core of Egyptian religion. This meant that the king as main actor, 'and not only the people,' participated. According to Assmann, these celebrations became the most important medium of royal representation. Through this change over time, the results for royalty led to a sense of 'history as festival,' to reuse Hornung's felicitous phrase; the feast itself turned into a royal activity, i.e., it was political. This interpretation allows us to view the transmutation of one-sided religious events as something more complex. A procession festival thereby

was not merely a reflection of a simple agriculturally based ritual, but instead a public demonstration of the role of the monarch in the divine world."

11 See Baines 2008; 2007: 183–84. Even the interpretation of entries of the *Palermo Stone* is anything but unambiguous: insofar as eponymous events were concerned, those had to be determined before the start of the year and included calendrical fix-points which do not necessarily reflect ritual action. They are therefore at most elements of a political program and cannot claim any historicity. On the other hand, the entries clearly include events that go beyond the ritual; e.g., under king Snofru of the 4th dynasty, the record mentions a historical military campaign to Nubia and settlement activity in the Nile delta.

12 Baines 2007: 180; on this view also, but in a different context, Schneider 2003a: 155–61.

13 For the debate on a possible Nubian campaign, see Darnell and Manassa 2007: 121–25. On Horemheb's building activity in Nubia, see now Sidro 2006.

14 Assmann 1991. The term has been used widely in Egyptology, for example by Neureiter 1994: 244; Loprieno 1996b: 287; Moers 2001: 270 n. 509.

15 The literature on this topic is extremely vast. See for a brief overview Murnane 1999; for the new reconstruction of his early career on the basis of his Memphite tomb, van Dijk 1993; and, in the context of the aftermath of the Amarna period, Dodson 2009; Kawai 2010.

16 Redford 1986: 19–20 (Abydos list of Seti I), 22 (list of Tjuloy), 35 (list of statues in the Min festival reliefs at Ramses II's funerary temple, the Ramesseum; similarly, at Ramses III's mortuary temple of Medinet Habu, 37), 40 (list Cairo Ostracon 25.646; on which see Philips 1977), 43 (offering table of Qenherkhepshef), 44 (offering table of Paneb).

17 Manetho, fragments 51–53 (ed. Waddell, Loeb Classical Library, 108–119).

18 A history of scholarly assessments of Akhenaten has not yet been written. For an overview and analysis of the diversity of judgments, see Montserrat 2000; Eaton-Krauss 1990, 2002. The three approaches mentioned hereafter are represented in exemplary ways in (1) Wilson 1951: 207–8; (2) Hornung 1999; (3) Gnirs 2004. The arguments provided for the last hypothesis by Kozloff 2006 remain inconclusive.

19 A more exclusive role is given Amun in the coronation inscription at the temple of Month: *Urk.* IV 2125–26 (trans. Helck 1961: 408–9).

20 See as another example the advent of the 12th dynasty and the introduction of coregency; from the 18th dynasty, the accessions to the throne of Thutmose I, Hatshepsut, Thutmose IV, Amenophis IV, etc.

21 Urk. IV 390; Allen 2002; Goedicke 2004.

22 Murnane and van Siclen 1993: 42.

23 Grandet 1994–1999.

24 *Deeds of Shuppiluliuma*: Chavalas 2006: 236–239; *Ten Year Annals of Murshili II*: Chavalas, 254–257. See Hoffner 1980; Güterbock 1983; Klinger 2001, 2008. See also van den Hout's chapter in this vol.

25 KUB 19.15 + KBo 50.24, on which see Miller 2006; 2007: 252–93; 2008. For discussion, see further Stempel 2007; Groddek 2007; Wilhelm 2009, 2012. I would like to thank Gernot Wilhelm for having made his 2012 article available to me. Doubts expressed by Simon 2009 about the identification of the "Arma" mentioned here with Horemheb seem unfounded.

26 On this decree, see Krutchen 1981; Gnirs 1989; Allam 1993.

27 *Urk.* IV 2149–51.

28 Davies 1995: 80.

29　*Urk.* IV, 2135 (no. 836); 2170–71, respectively. See also the prominent scribe statue of Horemheb portraying him as an exemplary literate and wise king: Delvaux 1992.

30　Stadelmann 1986; von Beckerath 1993; K.A. Kitchen, RITANC II, 168–172 (text: KRI II, 287–288; trans. RITA II, 116–117).

31　Von Beckerath 1993: 402; Murnane 1995: 192–95 ("hazardous but not improbable"); Brand 2000: 336–37.

32　Quack 2002; see now, for another example, Simpson 2001: 7–8.

33　As cited by Neureiter 1995: 231. In a similar context, Baines (2007: 186) notices that such argumentation "assumes a remarkable naivety in the Egyptians."

34　Pascal Vernus's work on historical consciousness in ancient Egypt (1995) accumulates hundreds of references mentioning first-time achievements, or having surpassed accomplishments of the past. John Tait's volume on Egyptians' views of their past (2003), although passing over Hornung's study (1966) in silence, underscores a new interest in the diversity of the Egyptian sense and use of the past, as does Baines 2007.

35　See above at n. 23.

36　Grayson 1980: 175. For an assessment of different chronographic and historiographic traditions, see also Renger 1996.

37　For an overview of those late texts, see Quack 2005; Gozzoli 2006: 153–304.

38　Enabling a proximity to military language and soldiers' jargon. For the terminology, see Schneider 2008b.

39　Manetho: the Harmais episode (Harmais is the Greek name form of *Horemheb*). For the identification with Horemheb, see Redford 1986: 256–57. Alternatively, the story might refer to events under Amenmesse or a pretender Mehy, the latter a short form of the name Horemheb, of a rival for kingship at the transition from Seti I to Ramses II: Schneider 2010. The protagonist "Mehy" from the third stanza of the *pChester-Beatty* love songs has been equated with this pretender Mehy (see Gillam 2000). However, since fragmentary love songs on ostraca Deir el-Medina 1078 and 1079 inscribe the name "Mehy" in cartouches and the pretender Mehy is not known to have achieved kingship, the king Horemheb is a likely candidate.

40　The variety becomes at times apparent, e.g., in the conflicting local traditions predicting a Messiah in the late apocalyptic literature (Schipper and Blasius 2002).

41　See also Darnell and Manassa 2007b: 50.

References

Abusch, T., P.-A. Beaulieu, J. Huehnergard et al. (eds.). 2001. *Historiography in the Cuneiform World*. Bethesda.

Allam, S. 1993. "The Tax Exemption of Horemheb." In Z. Hawass and L. Pinch Brock (eds.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: History – Religion*, 97–102. Cairo and New York.

Allen, J.P. 2002. "The Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut." *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 16: 1–17.

Alonso-Núñez, J.M. 2007. "Historiographical Models." *Brill's New Pauly. Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World: Classical Tradition*, II: 888–913. Leiden.

Assmann, J. 1991. "Der Einbruch der Geschichte. Die Wandlung des Gottes- und Weltbegriffs im Alten Ägypten." In Assmann, *Stein und Zeit. Mensch und Gesellschaft im Alten Ägypten*, 288–302. Munich.

Assmann, J. 2006. "Zeit und Geschichte in frühen Kulturen." In F. Stadler and M. Stöltzner (eds.), *Time and History. Proceedings of the 28th International Wittgenstein Symposium*, 489–507. Heusenstamm.

Baines, J. 2007. "Ancient Egyptian Concepts and Uses of the Past: Third to Second Millennium Evidence" [1989]. In Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 179–201. Oxford.

Baines, J. 2008. "On the Evolution, Purpose, and Forms of Egyptian Annals." In E.-M. Engel, V. Müller, and U. Hartung (eds.), *Zeichen aus dem Sand. Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer*, 19–40. Wiesbaden.

Bernbeck, R. 2005. "The Past as Fact and Fiction: From Historical Novels to Novel Histories." In S. Pollock and R. Bernbeck (eds.), *Archaeologies of the Middle East: Critical Perspectives*, 97–121. Oxford.

Bernstein, S. 2007. "'Nature seem'd to lose her course': Crisis Historiography and Historiographic Crisis in Charlotte Smith's *The Emigrants*." In L. Felber (ed.), *Clio's Daughters: British Women Making History, 1790–1899*, 28–42. Newark.

Brand, P.J. 2000. *The Monuments of Seti I: Epigraphic, Historical and Art Historical Analysis*. Leiden.

Brown, D. 1997. "Poetry, History, Nation: The Praises of Shaka kaSenzangakhona." *English in Africa* 24: 7–36.

Chavalas, M.W. (ed.). 2006. *The Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation*. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Darnell, J.C., and C. Manassa. 2007. *Tutankhamun's Armies: Battle and Conquest during Ancient Egypt's Late Eighteenth Dynasty*. Hoboken, NJ.

Davies, B.G. 1995. *Egyptian Historical Records of the Later Eighteenth Dynasty*. Fascicle VI. Warminster.

Delvaux, L. 1992. "Amenhotep, Horemheb et Paramessou: Les grandes statues de scribes à la fin de la 18e dynastie." In M. Broze (ed.), *L'atelier de l'orfèvre. Mélanges offerts à Ph. Derchain*, 47–53. Leuven.

Diwald, H. 1969. *Wallenstein. Eine Biographie*. Munich.

Dodson, A. 2009. *Amarna Sunset: Nefertiti, Tutankhamun, Ay, Horemheb, and the Egyptian Counter-Reformation*. Cairo.

Eaton-Krauss, M. 1990. "Akhenaten versus Akhenaten." *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 47: 541–59.

Eaton-Krauss, M. 2002. "Akhenaten Redux." *Chronique d'Égypte* 77: 93–107.

Eco, U. 2000. *Kant and the Platypus*. Boston.

Edzard, D.O. 1980–83. "Königslisten und Chroniken. A. Sumerisch" *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 6: 77–86.

Eyre, C. 1996. "Is Egyptian Historical Literature 'Historical' or 'Literary'?" *In Loprieno 1996*: 415–33.

Feldges, B. 2008. *American Icons: The Genesis of a National Visual Language*. New York.

Gillam, R.A. 2000. "The Mehy Papers: Text and Lifestyle in Translation." *Chronique d'Égypte* 75: 207–16.

Glassner, J.-J. 2005. *Mesopotamian Chronicles*. 2nd edn. Atlanta.

Gnirs, A. 1989. "Haremhab – ein Staatsreformator? Neue Betrachtungen zum Haremhab-Dekret." *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 16: 83–110.

Gnirs, A. 2004. "Die 18. Dynastie: Licht und Schatten eines internationalen Zeitalters." In A. Wiese and A. Brodbeck (eds.), *Tutanchamun. Das Goldene Jenseits: Grabschätze aus dem Tal der Könige*, 27–44. Basel.

Goedicke, H. 2004.*The Speos Artemidos Inscription of Hatshepsut and Related Discussions*. Oakville.

Gozzoli, R.B. 2006. *The Writing of History in Ancient Egypt during the First Millennium BC (ca. 1070–180 BC): Trends and Perspectives*. London.

Grandet, P. 1994–99. *Le papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)*. 3 vols. Cairo.

Grayson, A.K. 1980. "History and Historians of the Ancient Near East: Assyria and Babylonia." *Orientalia* 49: 140–94.

Groddek, D. 2007. "Zu den neuen ägyptisch-hethitischen Synchronismen der Nach-Amarna-Zeit." *Göttinger Miszellen* 215: 95–107.

Gundlach, R., and C. Vogel (eds.). 2009. *Militärgeschichte des pharaonischen Ägypten. Altägypten und seine Nachbarkulturen im Spiegel der aktuellen Forschung*. Paderborn.

Güterbock, H.G. 1983. "Hittite Historiography: A Survey." In H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (eds.), *History, Historiography, and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, 21–35. Jerusalem and Leiden.

Hallo, W.W. 2010a. "New Directions in Historiography (Mesopotamia and Israel)." In Hallo 2010d: 431–51.

Hallo, W.W. 2010b. "Sumerian Historiography." In Hallo 2010d: 419–30.

Hallo, W.W. 2010c. "Sumerian History in Pictures: A New Look at the 'Stele of the Flying Angels'." In Hallo 2010d: 471–92.

Hallo, W.W. 2010d. *The World's Oldest Literature: Studies in Sumerian Belles-Lettres*. Leiden.

Helck, W. 1961. *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. Übersetzung zu den Heften* 17–22. Berlin.

Helck, W. 1994. "Die Männer hinter dem König und die Königswahl." *Zeitschrift für altägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 121: 136–151.

Hoffner, H.A. 1980. "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites." *Orientalia* 49: 283–332.

Hornung, E. 1966. *Geschichte als Fest. Zwei Vorträge zum Geschichtsbild der frühen Menschheit*. Darmstadt. Rev. repr. in Hornung 1989.

Hornung, E. 1989. *Geist der Pharaonenzeit*. Zurich. Last reprint 2005. Engl. trans.: Hornung 1992.

Hornung, E. 1992. *Idea into Image: Essays on Ancient Egyptian Thought*. New York.

Hornung, E. 1999. *Akhenaten and the Religion of Light*. Ithaca.

Huizinga, J. 1936. "A Definition of the Concept of History." In R. Klibansky and H.J. Paton (eds.), *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, 1–10. Oxford.

Kaelin, O. 1999. *Ein assyrisches Bildexperiment nach ägyptischem Vorbild. Zu Planung und Ausführung der Schlacht am Ulai*. Münster.

Kantorowicz, E.H. 1957. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton.

Kawai, N. 2010. "Ay versus Horemheb: The Political Situation in the Late Eighteenth Dynasty Revisited." *Journal of Egyptian History* 3: 261–92.

Kern, M. 2004. "The Poetry of Han Historiography." *Early Medieval China* 10–11.1: 23–65.

Klinger, J. 2001. "Historiographie als Paradigma. Die Quellen zur hethitischen Geschichte und ihre Deutung." In G. Wilhelm (ed.), *Akten des 4. Hethitologischen Kongresses Würzburg 1999*, 272–91. Würzburg.

Klinger, J. 2008. "Geschichte oder Geschichten – zum literarischen Charakter der hethitischen Historiographie." In K.-P. Adam (ed.), *Historiographie in der Antike*, 27–48. Berlin.

Kozloff, A.P. 2006. "Bubonic Plague during the Reign of Amenhotep III?" *KMT. A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* 17/3: 36–46.

Krutchen, J.-M. 1981. *Le Décret d'Horemheb. Introduction, commentaire épigraphique, philologique, et institutionnel.* Brussels.

Liverani, M. 1973. "Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts." *Orientalia* 42: 178–94.

Loprieno, A. (ed.). 1996a. *Egyptian Literature: History and Forms.* Leiden.

Loprieno, A. 1996b. "The 'King's Novel'." In Loprieno 1996a. 277–95.

Mann, G. 1971. *Wallenstein. Sein Leben erzählt von Golo Mann.* Frankfurt a. M.

Michalowski, P. 1983. "History as Charter: Some Observations on the Sumerian King List." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103: 237–248.

Miller, J.L. 2006. *Texte historischen Inhalts, KBo 50.* Berlin.

Miller, J.L. 2007. "Amarna Age Chronology and the Identity of Nibḫururiya in the Light of a Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 34: 252–93.

Miller, J.L. 2008. "The Rebellion of Hatti's Syrian Vassals and Egypt's Meddling in Amurru." *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 50: 533–54.

Mitchell, M.L. 2008. "Reflecting on Catastrophe: Lamentations 4 as Historiography." In P.G. Kirkpatrick and T. Goltz (eds.), *The Function of Ancient Historiography in Biblical and Cognate Studies*, 78–90. London.

Moers, G. 2001. *Fingierte Welten in der ägyptischen Literatur des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. Grenzüberschreitung, Reisemotiv und Fiktionalität (PÄ 19).* Leiden.

Montserrat, D. 2000. *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy, and Ancient Egypt.* London.

Murnane, W.J. 1995. "The Kingship of the Nineteenth Dynasty: A Study in the Resilience of an Institution." In D. O'Connor and D.P. Silverman (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 185–217. Leiden 1995.

Murnane, W.J. 1999. "The Return to Orthodoxy." In R.E. Freed, S. D'Auria, and Y.J. Markowitz (eds.), *Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*, 177–85. London.

Murnane, W.J. and C.C. van Siclen III. 1993. *The Boundary Stelae of Akhenaten.* London.

Neureiter, S. 1994. "Eine neue Interpretation des Archaismus." *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 21: 219–54.

Otto, E. 1958. *Ägypten. Der Weg des Pharaonenreiches.* 3rd edn. Stuttgart.

Panitschek, P. 2008. *LUGAL – šarru – basileus: Formen der Monarchie im Alten Vorderasien von der Uruk-Zeit bis zum Hellenismus,* pt. 1: *Von der Uruk-Zeit bis Ur III.* Frankfurt a. M.

Philips, A.K. 1977. "Horemheb, Founder of the XIXth Dynasty? – O. Cairo 25646 Reconsidered." *Orientalia* 46: 116–121.

Pritchard, J.B. 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 3rd edn. Princeton.

Quack, J.F. 2002. "Zwischen Sonne und Mond. Zeitrechnung im alten Ägypten." In H. Falk (ed.), *Vom Herrscher zur Dynastie. Zum Wesen kontinuierlicher Zeitrechnung in Antike und Gegenwart*, 27–67. Bremen.

Quack, J.F. 2005. *Einführung in die ägyptische Literaturgeschichte,* III: *Die gräko-ägyptische Literatur.* Münster.

Redford, D.B. 1986. *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-books.* Mississauga.

Renger, J. 1996. "Vergangenes Geschehen in der Textüberlieferung des alten Mesopotamien." In H.-J. Gehrke and A. Möller (eds.), *Vergangenheit und Lebenswelt. Soziale Kommunikation, Traditionsbildung und historisches Bewusstsein*, 9–60. Tübingen.

Roth, S. 2006. "Der Herrscher im Fest. Zur rituellen Herrschaftslegitimation des ägyptischen Königs und ihrer Außendarstellung im Rahmen von Festen." In D. Bröckelmann and A. Klug (eds.), *In Pharaos Staat. Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach zum 75. Geburtstag*, 205–49. Wiesbaden.

Roth, S. 2008. "'Angesichts des ganzen Landes.' Zu Partizipationsstruktur und Affirmationsmechanismen von Festen des altägyptischen Königtums." In D. Prechel (ed.), *Fest und Eid. Instrumente der Herrschaftssicherung im Alten Orient*, 135–58. Würzburg.

Schipper, B.U., and A. Blasius. 2002. *Apokalyptik und Ägypten. Eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*. Leuven.

Schlögl, H. 2003. *Das Alte Ägypten*. Munich.

Schneider, T. 1998. "Mythos und Zeitgeschichte in der 30. Dynastie: Eine politische Lektüre des *Mythos von den Götterkönigen*." In A. Brodbeck (ed.), *Ein ägyptisches Glasperlenspiel. Ägyptologische Beiträge für Erik Hornung aus seinem Schülerkreis*, 207–45. Berlin.

Schneider, T. 2003a. "Foreign Egypt: Egyptology and the Concept of Cultural Appropriation." *Ägypten & Levante/Egypt & the Levant* 13: 155–61.

Schneider, T. 2003b. "Texte über den syrischen Wettergott aus Ägypten." *Ugarit Forschungen* 35: 605–27.

Schneider, T. 2008a. "Das Ende der kurzen Chronologie. Eine kritische Bilanz der Debatte zur absoluten Datierung des Mittleren Reiches und der Zweiten Zwischenzeit." *Ägypten & Levante/Egypt & the Levant* 18: 275–313.

Schneider, T. 2008b. "Fremdwörter in der ägyptischen Militärsprache des Neuen Reiches und ein Bravourstück des Elitesoldaten (Pap. Anastasi I 23, 2–7)." *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 35: 181–205.

Schneider, T. 2010. "Conjectures about Amenmesse: Historical, Biographical, Chronological." In M. Collier and S. Snape (eds.), *Ramesside Studies: Festschrift Kenneth A. Kitchen*, 99–105. Bolton.

Schneider, T. (2011–12). "Wie der Wettergott Ägypten aus der großen Flut errettete: Ein 'inkulturierter' ägyptischer Sintflut-Mythos und die Gründung der Ramsesstadt." *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 38: 173–193.

Schulz, G. 1992. *Einführung in die Zeitgeschichte*. Darmstadt.

Sidro, M. 2006. *Der Felstempel von Abu 'Oda. Eine architektonische und ikonographische Untersuchung*. Hamburg.

Simon, Z. 2009. "Kann Armā mit Haremhab gleichgesetzt werden?" *Altorientalische Forschungen* 36: 340–48.

Simpson, W.K. 2001. "Studies in the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty, III: Year 25 in the Era of the Oryx Nome and the Famine Years in Early Dynasty 12." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 38: 7–8.

Smith, M. 1999. "Gebel el-Silsila." In K.A. Bard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt*, 394–97. London.

Spalinger, A. 1997. "Drama in History: Exemplars from Mid Dynasty XVIII." *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 24: 269–300.

Spalinger, A. 1998. "The Limitations of Formal Ancient Egyptian Religion." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 57: 241–60.

Spalinger, A. 2010. "Two Screen Plays: 'Kamose' and 'Apophis and Seqenenre'." *Journal of Egyptian History* 3.1: 115–35.

Spiegel, G.M. 1997. *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*. Baltimore.

Stadelmann, R. 1986. "Vierhundertjahrstele." *LÄ* 6: 1039–-43.

Stempel, R. 2007. "Identification of Nibhururiya and the Synchronism in the Egyptian and Hittite Chronology in the Light of [a]Newly Reconstructed Hittite Text." *Göttinger Miszellen* 213: 97–100.

Sweetenham, C., and L.M. Paterson. 2003. The Canso d'Antioca: *An Occitan Epic Chronicle of the First Crusade*. Aldershot, England, and Burlington, VT.

Tait, J. (ed.). 2003. "*Never Had the Like Occurred": Egypt's View of its Past*. London.

Thiem, A.–C. 2000. *Speos von Gebel es-Silsileh: Analyse der architektonischen und ikonographischen Konzeption im Rahmen des politischen und legitimatorischen Programmes der Nachamarnazeit*. Wiesbaden.

Vail, H.L., and L.E. White (eds.). 1991. *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*. Charlottesville, VA and London.

van de Mieroop, M. 1999. *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History*. London.

van Dijk, J. 1993. "Horemheb, Prince Regent of Tut'ankhamun." In van Dijk, *The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis – Historical and Iconographical Studies*, 11–64.

van Seters, J. 1995. "The Historiography of the Ancient Near East." In J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, IV: 2433–44. New York.

Vernus, P. 1995. *Essai sur la conscience de l'histoire dans l'Égypte pharaonique*. Paris.

von Beckerath, J. 1993. "Nochmals die 'Vierhundertjahr-Stele'." *Orientalia* 62: 400–403.

von Rad, G. 1966. "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel." In von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, 166–204. Trans. E.W. Trueman Dicken. New York.

Wahl, H.M. 1997. *Die Jakobserzählungen. Studien zu ihrer mündlichen Überlieferung, Verschriftung und Historizität*. Berlin.

Wilhelm, G. 2009. "Muršilis II. Konflikt mit Ägypten und Haremhabs Thronbesteigung." *Welt des Orients* 39: 108–16.

Wilhelm, G. 2012. "Die Regierung Šuppiluliumas I. und die Chronologie der Amarna-Zeit." In R. Hachmann (ed.), *Die Keilschriftbriefe und der Horizont von el-Amarna*. 225–257.

Wilson, J.A. 1951. *The Burden of Egypt. An Interpretation of Ancient Egyptian Culture*. Chicago.

Wolf, W. 1971. *Das alte Ägypten*. Munich.

8

The Presence of the Past in Early Mesopotamian Writings

Piotr Michalowski

Chronological Table: Periods and Main Rulers Mentioned in the Text[1]

3200 First Mesopotamian writings

2750–2350 Early Dynastic Period
   Ur-Nanshe (Lagash)
   Eanatum (Lagash
   Urukagina (Lagash) ~ Lugalzagesi (Umma)

2334–2154 Sargonic (Old Akkadian) Period
   Sargon (2334–2279)
   Naram-Sin (2254–2218)
   Shar-kali-sharri (2217–2193)

2112–2004 Third Dynasty of Ur
   Ur-Namma (2112–2095)
   Shulgi (2094–2047)
   Shu-Sin (2037–2029)
   Ibbi-Sin (2028–2004)

2003–1595 Old Babylonian Period
   Hammurabi (1792–1750)
   Samsuiluna (1749–1712)
   Ammisaduqa (1646–1626)

Introduction

In Mesopotamia, as in most ancient societies, writing skills were mastered by only a small number of individuals in society, most of them male. The scope and the very nature of literacy, and even the languages that were recorded changed substantially over the more than three millennia of cuneiform documentation (circa 3200 BCE – first century CE).[2] There is also a growing body of evidence suggesting that not all literate people were exposed to literary texts during the educational process, and as a result one must assume that direct knowledge of the written representations of history was severely restricted in early Mesopotamia (Michalowski 2012). Because our understanding of historiographic concepts and practice is limited to formalized textual sources produced by elites, it is extremely difficult to perceive any significance of the use of the past for the understanding or construction of personal identity in Mesopotamia outside of the sphere of royal self-representation. Likewise, we cannot recover any information on the possible existence of individuals or institutions that may have been involved in the preservation of personal or collective memory. In view of these facts, this essay must, by default, focus on written texts and genres that in one way or another deal with the past or memorialize the present for the future.[3] For practical reasons, this essay is limited to writings from third and early second millennium Mesopotamia. The way in which texts were used to describe and appropriate the past changed remarkably in later times; to describe this would require a separate chapter (Liverani 2011).

 The first Mesopotamian writings appear in the archaeological record around 3200 BCE, but these precursors of the cuneiform script were developed to notate administrative records, not to record fully realized expressions of language. Narrative texts – primarily poetry – become prevalent only around 2700, and the more developed cuneiform writing system, originally developed for Sumerian, could now be adopted to serve any language. This form of Mesopotamian writing lasted for almost three millennia, but the medium never developed any form of metadiscourse, so that there are no essays, no meditations on how things should be done, and no philosophical texts. This does not mean that Mesopotamians did not indulge in reflection about the surrounding world, only that such speculation and description was expressed through poetry, lists, or basic descriptions of events, but not by means of exploratory prose narrative. It is therefore difficult to determine which uses of writing can be described as "historical" (Michalowski 1999). The problem is, moreover, complicated by a tendency of modern scholarship to use this term for any written materials that we today utilize as historical sources. Consequently, there is no absolute scholarly consensus on a list of texts that might be described as "historical" or "historiographic" writing. Since the definitional matter is much too complex to be debated here, I will just accept that any writings that invoke the past as a charter for the present, or which constitute the present in such a manner as to create a past for future readers, will warrant our attention here. The past is never the subject of disinterested description and analysis, but is always

infused with the "presence of the now," to use Walter Benjamin's often cited expression (1968: 261), and by such criteria the use of writing to depict "history" came relatively late in Mesopotamian history. But even when such matters began to be addressed, it was not by means of strictly historical texts or genres: historical issues never stood alone, but were always embedded in a multifaceted discursive matrix that is not always easy to disentangle (Michalowski 1999).

The first known Mesopotamian writings are preserved on approximately five thousand clay tablets discovered in the city of Uruk, dating from around 3200 BCE. As noted above, the writing system, known to moderns as protocuneiform, was invented exclusively for accounting purposes. As in the earliest Egyptian writing system, many of the five thousand or so protocuneiform signs were pictographic; that is, they were simplified depictions of the nouns that they represented. But unlike Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Mesopotamian signs, which were inscribed on clay with a reed stylus, soon lost their representational aspects and became purely abstract, losing all resemblance to their referents. As a result, cuneiform writing occupied a different social and symbolic space from artistic depictions, and while some monuments could include writing as well as images, they were never organically linked, as they were in Egypt.

Early Dynastic Writings (2750–2350)

The Uruk tablets are administrative and didactic in nature, limited only to accounting. The earliest Mesopotamian commemorative text known to us was written a few centuries later in the northern city of Kish or in its environs, inscribed in four columns on a partially preserved alabaster plaque, slightly over a foot square, with a depiction of two unnamed individuals carrying bows and possibly throwing sticks (Steinkeller, forthcoming). The surviving part of the text is simple: it lists 36,000 captives from twenty-five places, prisoners of war who were assigned to work in various orchards and threshing floors. There is a final reference to the main god of Kish, followed by the name of the scribe who apparently wrote the text. At present this text is unique, but it suggests that already around 2700 BCE or slightly later, the permanent medium of stone was being used to commemorate political events in writing for contemporary as well as future eyes.

A century or so later, around 2600, cuneiform had spread to other areas of the Near East, and the first literary texts appear in the archaeological record, inscribed on clay tablets found in cities located in southern and northern Mesopotamia as well as in Syria (Krebernik 1998). This was a time of relatively independent polities – often described as "city-states" – that coexisted in constantly shifting political relationships; alliances and wars came and went but, except for some ephemeral attempts at creating larger polities, these kingdoms usually encompassed one or two major urban centers and their surrounding rural territories. Most, if not all, of these "Early Dynastic" literary texts are poetic in form and mythological in content, as far as one can presently determine. Many are fragmentary and few can be

understood with confidence, but nothing suggests that any of them are directly concerned with human affairs. Time is referenced, but it is purely mythological: many poems begin in primeval times, at the moment when heaven and earth were separated, oftentimes violently, and continue with narratives that deal with gods and goddesses, before humans came to be. One exception to this pattern concerns a fragment of a story about a tryst between a goddess and a man by the name of Lugalbanda, who was, in later tradition, the hero of an epic poem that mingles human and divine affairs, and who would also become a king of the city of Uruk (Jacobsen 1989; Alster 1990). This is, as far as one can determine, the one and only instance of a literary reference to events of the past, and even that is a semi-mythical and not a politically determined "historical" past.

In addition to administrative and literary uses on clay tablets, in the Early Dynastic period writing was also for the first time applied to inscribing votive and funerary objects, such as statues, stone and clay vessels, cones, disks, mace-heads, swords, spear-points, lamps, plaques, bricks, beads, and cylinder seals (Cooper 1986; Frayne 2004). The writings on these objects range from single lines that register only a personal name to longer dedicatory inscriptions, and while most of the names are those of rulers, a small number belong to royal wives, relatives, divine servants, or other elite members of society. Many of these inscriptions are dedicatory, recording the name of the person who presented an object to a divinity. Others mark the property of kings – such objects are often found in funerary contexts – and only in a few cases the property of a temple. A small number of inscriptions record the achievements of rulers, either the building or rebuilding of monumental buildings (mostly temples) or military victories. Finally, there are metal and stone tablets, as well as inscribed figurines, that carry royal inscriptions and functioned as foundation deposits. All of these are witnesses to a new use of writing: the identification of the names of individuals and of their deeds, be they cultic, administrative, or military in nature.

There is no substantive or typological distinction between the earliest inscriptions that record building activities and those that add information about military victories; indeed, the latter are simply added to records of pious construction. The common denominator in all these texts is the preservation of memory on durable materials such as metal or stone. Southern Mesopotamia is completely lacking in sources of metal and has no rock formations except for limestone, and thus, in addition to durability, these objects also carry the message of hard-to-obtain prestige items. One can therefore be certain that the surviving sample is but a small percentage of what was actually created, preserved in random fashion by chance, as most of such items would have been looted and/or reused in antiquity. For such reasons, much of our knowledge of early royal inscriptions derives from later scribal copies from monuments, or from objects looted by foreign armies and kept as trophies in places, such as the Iranian city of Susa, where they were discovered by modern archaeologists. It is difficult to assess the statistical value of the surviving sample of commemorative inscriptions from early times, but it seems quite certain that by the end of the third millennium commemorative writing on permanent media was ubiquitous in temples, on graves, and possibly in public spaces as well.

Since we are dealing with a society of highly restricted literacy, the intended audience of commemorative and monumental texts and representations is an important question, particularly in the context of a discussion of writing about history. Because so many of the relevant objects were recovered from secondary contexts, it is difficult to establish just how accessible they were to contemporary eyes. Certainly, inscriptions on grave goods and foundation deposits, as well as on hidden architectural elements such as door pivot stones, were written with the divine world and future generations in mind. Much the same can be said about statues and stelae that adorned rooms and courtyards in temples, as these were not accessible to many. How many monuments were erected in more public spaces, addressed to contemporary nonelite audiences, is difficult to establish for the earlier periods of Mesopotamian history. It is important to note, however, that the names that are presented to contemporary human and divine eyes, but also for remembrance by future generations, are those of royal or elite persons. This is historical memory, but it is projected into the future to create a past at some distant time ahead.

Third-millennium Historical Narratives

In light of what we know today, we can trace the development of writing on monuments and votive objects for purposes of preserving a record of complex events in one place only: the polity of Lagash during the last century and a half of the Early Dynastic period. Various texts discovered in the two main urban centers of the state, Girsu and Lagash, document the deeds of nine kings who ruled in direct succession, most of them related, and are therefore considered a dynasty. Inscriptions from the time of the first king of this dynasty, Ur-Nanshe, record numerous building activities, but some of them also note that he imported timber from foreign lands.[4] Unlike earlier kings, he combined his achievements in inscriptions, listing them in various formats and creating texts that refer not only to the moment but also to other times. Moreover, in addition to building activities, he records the installation of a priestess by divination – the kind of act that later kings would celebrate in year-names – and, in one case, offers the first elaborated description of a military conflict. Ur-Nanshe proclaims that he went to war against two other polities, Ur and Umma, and then briefly notes the names of the captured leaders and their officers who were apparently put to death. The text is inscribed on a stone slab, but it was most probably a model or a practice exemplar for a larger monument that included depictions of some of the events, including representations of the enemy captives. Fragments of such stelae from the period have survived, albeit without any accompanying inscriptions.

Ur-Nanshe's war description began a new chapter in Mesopotamian writing. All of his successors would continue to elaborate narratives of a seemingly perpetual border conflict with Umma and to have them inscribed on permanent media; the best and most extensive example is a stone bas-relief from the time of

the third king of the dynasty of Lagash, Eanatum, which depicts the king leading his army into battle and the god Ningirsu holding an enormous net filled with captives from Umma, as well as vultures circling with heads of dead soldiers in their beaks. This monument, known as the *Stele of the Vultures*, is inscribed with a long description of a victorious war with Umma, but this series of events is book-ended by two accounts that bear witness to a new conception of time and narrative (Cooper 1986: 33–39). At the outset, Eanatum ascribes the roots of the current conflict to earlier days, referring to the reign of his father and perhaps even to events that took place during the tenure of his grandfather, Ur-Nanshe, and at the end he claims other victories over polities in Sumer as well as in the highlands and valleys of neighboring Iran, that is, in the areas that were the sources of many of Mesopotamia's luxury goods. In this manner the *Stele of the Vultures* takes a step beyond the commemoration of a specific event and situates it in a larger military and temporal context. Eanatum also invokes the main divinities of the Sumerian pantheon as his protectors and thus lays claim to legitimation beyond the borders of his own polity, linking military might with pan-Mesopotamian religious authority. While this text invokes history for present purposes, there are indications that the objective is to preserve information and political claims for the future as well, as suggested by the choice of the stone as the medium. Another element of the inscription is a curse on any future ruler of Umma who might be tempted to renege on the final agreement that established the border between the two states. Other texts from this time suggest, more directly, that the monuments were indeed inscribed with future generations in mind. There are numerous bricks, stone boulders, clay vessels, and other objects from the reign of Eanatum that announce his many military exploits, and at least one of them ends with a curse warning any future king who might attempt to damage or destroy his engraved words.

   Such votive and commemorative inscriptions, set on a variety of objects, seem to have been ubiquitous in the Lagash polity for approximately 150 years, and when military exploits are mentioned they are primarily concerned with the ever-erupting border disputes with Umma, possibly ignoring other conflicts. Indeed, taken together, they create – for the first time that we can detect – a semblance of a historical narrative that situates the politics of the present within an ongoing discourse rooted in, and sanctioned by, the past.[5] They ended in a context that was dictated by events that encompassed a larger political scope. Around 2350 BCE a military leader by the name of Lugalzagesi managed to conquer much of southern Mesopotamia and launched an attack on Lagash. The century-and-a-half series of historical texts ends with a unique tablet from the time of his contemporary Urukagina; after listing all the shrines plundered by the enemy, the lament concludes (Cooper 1986: 79; Wilcke 2007: 167): "The Ummaite, having plundered Lagash, has committed a crime against divine Ningirsu; the hands that reached out (to do his deed) will be cut off! This is not the crime of Urukagina, king of Girsu, but of Lugalzagesi, king of Umma, and therefore may his goddess Nidaba forever carry his guilt (for these deeds)!"

The historical inscriptions of Lagash are unique for their time, but it is possible that similar writings existed elsewhere but have not survived or been recovered to this day. Different in tone and content, but indicative of broader political intentions, as well as of a new intensity of self-representational strategy, is an inscription of the very Lugalzagesi who had put an end to the independence of both Lagash and Umma (Cooper 1986: 94–95). This text was written on at least fifty stone vessels dedicated to the god Enlil in Nippur, and it claims, for the first time, as far as we know, divinely bestowed dominion over all of Sumer and its major urban centers. The intended audience for this is a matter of interpretation: texts in sacred spaces were aimed at the gods, and some public display inscriptions were never really meant to be read by contemporaries, the vast majority of whom were illiterate; rather, they were a manifestation of control over the written word. Most important for our purposes, however, is the fact that many, if not all, of these display texts were also directed towards future generations, assuring the survival of the memory of names and deeds of kings and elites.

The Sargonic "Empire" (2334–2154)

Lugalzagesi's expanded kingdom did not last long. Another warlord, Sargon, defeated him and all other rulers of southern Mesopotamian polities. The conqueror came from a hitherto obscure city named Agade, which was probably located on the Tigris River not far from present-day Baghdad. Sargon and his successors ended the rule of independent city-state polities and ruled a territorial state that encompassed much of the area of what is now Iraq, as well as outposts in Syria and Iran, during what is called the Sargonic or Old Akkadian Period (2334–2154). Their armies marched far beyond the effective borders and frontier regions of the realm, reaching the Mediterranean in the west and the ends of the Persian Gulf in the south. Records of these raids and conquests were depicted on carved stone stelae that were often inscribed with accounts of the events.[6] Similar inscriptions adorned statues of the Sargonic kings, made from pillaged materials. Few complete originals of such monuments have survived, but we know the inscriptions from copies made by a few scribes living in the eighteenth century, mostly from the cities of Nippur and Ur. The Sargonic royal inscriptions provide dry accounts of cities plundered, numbers of killed and captured soldiers, and even descriptions of routes of campaigns. Unlike the Lagash inscriptions, they do not delve into the past but are resolutely focused on current events.[7] Moreover, the agency behind events is decisively human; the divine world is invoked, to be sure, but the main actors are the Sargonic kings and their soldiers; the net of the god Ningirsu, so prominent in the *Stele of the Vultures*, would be out of place in this new world in which programmatically cruel human military might is the focus of representation. Divine sanction is represented by means of symbols representing gods and goddesses, who are present, but are not the focus of the scenes. The monuments of this time proclaim the unstoppable progress of Akkadian armies, resulting in crushed or bound enemy

bodies symbolizing the universal hegemony of the new state, anticipating by more than a millennium the "calculated frightfulness" of the Assyrian kings, to invoke A.T. Olmstead's felicitous phrase (1918).

Three innovations stand out in this period. The Sargonic kings considered themselves to be masters of the universe, not just of Mesopotamia, and so they left permanent memorials to their deeds carved on stelae and rock carvings in the lands they conquered. Second, their royal writings provided straightforward, unembellished accounts of conquests, progressing from place to place with concrete details, including numbers of slain soldiers, as well as names of captured and killed enemy leaders. They were also explicit in directing their stories to future generations, ensuring that the written documentation of their accomplishments would keep the memory of their deeds alive for all time.

Many of their inscriptions end with curses that warn against erasing their names from the texts; such curses are documented earlier, but now they are commonly used. These curses survive in different versions, but the most common one reads: "whosoever should erase my inscription, may the gods X and Y tear out his foundation and pluck out his seed." This can be interpreted in different ways, but there can be no doubt of the main import of the consequences, that the offender will have no descendants, and therefore no one to perform funerary offerings and keep his name alive after death. In concrete fashion, the metaphor demonstrates that words on stone were to be like children that preserve the memory of their father, providing offerings of water for him in the afterlife, after his demise. Moreover, these curses differ significantly from the few earlier examples, which predict a bad reign for the transgressor, and not erasure from history.

The third Sargonic innovation that is pertinent to our story is the use of year-names to date administrative documents. Although a few earlier examples survive from the town of Nippur, it is only with the reign of Sargon that such a method of dating begins to be used more generally, although it must be admitted that under the kings of Akkad only small numbers of texts actually bear a year-name. The formulae (Frayne 1993: 8) celebrate military victories ("the year in which [king] Sargon destroyed (the land of) Arawa"), the construction of temples ("the year that the temple of [the goddess] Ishtar was (re)built in [the city of] Akkad"), and the selection of sacred temple personnel ("the year that the high priestess of [the god] Enlil was chosen by omens"). In this way, specific events were celebrated through such dating formulae on everyday administrative documents over the whole year; one would think that this occurred not simply in random fashion but reflected decisions conforming to a system of royal self-representational strategies. From later times we have lists of such year-names. Conjoined in sequences, these create narratives that can be read as historical texts. The first creators of the Sargonic formulae may have had more time-specific goals in mind, although, as the habit of naming years developed, the formulae may have been assigned for future legacy as well as for current self-glorification.

All these writings concern the present and are written with the future in mind. The past, however, is rarely referenced. One unique text, written in the name of

Naram-Sin, provides the claim that "since the creation of humanity, no king whosoever had destroyed Armanum and Ebla" (Frayne 1993: 132 ll. 1–9), but this contradicts the claim of his grandfather Sargon, who asserted that he had done just that.

After a century and a half of hegemony, the Old Akkadian kingdom collapsed and the political landscape of Mesopotamia reverted to local rule. A powerful dynasty, with the potential for more extensive domination, developed once again in Lagash, but for reasons that cannot be ascertained at present, the next unification of the land came from elsewhere. Eventually, a king of Ur by the name of Ur-Namma (2112–2095) brought much of the old core of the kingdom of Akkad under his control and created the foundations of a new territorial polity.

The Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004)

In early Mesopotamian historiography, the Third Dynasty of Ur occupies a singular place (Sallaberger 1999). The kings of Ur, like their Akkadian predecessors, laid claim to universal dominion, even if their power covered only the Mesopotamian lowlands, the valleys that led east into Iran and an ever shrinking and expanding area in the Iranian foothills and in some of the neighboring highlands. The use of year-names and commemorative inscriptions was maintained as in earlier times, but literature was also harnessed for self-representational and historical purposes. Hardly any literature from Old Akkadian times has survived, and therefore comparison is difficult, but all indications are that the Ur III crown exercised direct control over literary production, resulting in an almost total erasure of earlier creations and the hitching of poetry to contemporary royal concerns. New forms and genres, such as royal hymns, proclaimed the magnificence and imperial might of the new regime, and while it is possible that the roots of such developments took hold in Lagash in the time immediately preceding the rise of Ur, such early examples are scarce. Although few extensive royal inscriptions from the time have been discovered to-date, their existence is known to us from copies made by later scribes, as was the case with the Old Akkadian monuments.

One such collection, compiled from monuments by a scribe in eighteenth-century Nippur, demonstrates that the Ur III kings continued the Old Akkadian tradition of illustrated and inscribed victory monuments, but it also documents the close relationship between inscriptions and year formulae (Civil 1967). This is most important for the period, since in Ur III times almost every single administrative text – and more than eighty thousand have been published to-date – was dated by day, month, and year. The collection under discussion contains copies of inscriptions from the reign of Shu-Sin (2037–2029), the fourth ruler of the dynasty, which describe military events as well as the fashioning of votive objects for the gods. These were the same actions that served as the topics of his year-names, in the very same order as in the collection. It is apparent that the Ur III state utilized a complex, integrated program of political messages aimed at the literate bureaucracy and the elites, exploiting different media,

including public and private ceremonies, monuments, inscriptions, year-names, and a whole range of poetic compositions designed for performance as well as for use in the schooling of future bureaucrats. This program was realized in various media and included the alteration of the urban landscape: the stepped temple towers (ziggurats) that were apparently an Ur III innovation loomed over the cities of the land. In earlier periods the ceremonial centers were also raised high, but never to such a degree. These constructions, as well as the depiction of important royal achievements, served several intertwined functions: they were meant to impress contemporary as well as future audiences, but the orientation toward the future was also intended to symbolize the eternal nature of the Ur III polity and of its divine kings, whose dynasty was to rule supreme for all time but was in fact even shorter-lived than the preceding Akkad experiment at unified rule and eternal dominion.

The Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595)

The gods had other plans, however, and after a century of hegemony, the Ur III kingdom collapsed and new principalities rose to take its place. The time that followed is described, in modern terminology, as the Old Babylonian period (2003–1595). This epoch lasted approximately four hundred years, and except for a short period of unity under the yoke of Babylon it was a time of competing power centers.[8] Many royal inscriptions of the time are markedly more complex than those that came before, and the genre developed in a variety of ways under different dynasties. On the periphery of Mesopotamia, in the Iranian highlands, rulers of small local kingdoms framed mountainside relief carvings with inscriptions, in direct imitation of Old Akkadian models, symbolically invoking the past to impress the future.

When Hammurabi of Babylon (1793–1750) managed to gain control over southern and northern Babylonia, his new imperial notions found expression in his inscriptions, most notably in the monumental *Law Code* that was carved on stelae erected in the main cities of his kingdom (Roth 2000). By now it is generally agreed that the famous *Law Code* was hardly a piece of legislation in the modern sense, but an elaborate royal inscription that, by means of its 282 casuistic legal precepts, demonstrated an ideal of justice that was in the purview of the great monarch. The concept of Hammurabi as a king of justice was reinforced by a representation at the very top of the stele that showed the monarch receiving symbols of royal power from Shamash, the sun god, whose main responsibility was justice itself. The long narrative prologue that precedes the "laws" may have originated as a separate inscription, but its function in the overall composition of the text is clear: it narrates the divine decision to make Babylon the center of the universe and to bestow it, and its king Hammurabi, with universal dominion. The king, writing in the first person, then justifies such claims by listing his deeds on behalf of the main urban centers of his realm, their temples, gods, and peoples. In a long epilogue, Hammurabi warns anyone who would attempt to appropriate his stele, adding (Roth 2000: 134), "May my name be remembered favorably for all time in Esagil

temple (in Babylon) which I love." He then invites anyone who has been wronged to come before the monument and to have the inscribed words read aloud to him, so that he can obtain justice and praise the king who wrote them. These words were intended to stand forever, as further guaranteed by the longest early Mesopotamian set of curses against anyone who would wish to erase or change the king's words and image.

Hammurabi's kingdom began to crumble soon after his death, and his son Samsuiluna (1749–1712) had to face a rebellion that encompassed most of southern Babylonia. The inscriptions of this king document his brutal suppression of the uprising as well as campaigns against other enemies; moreover, some of these texts reflect a conscious invocation of older models, particularly those of Naram-Sin, Sargon's grandson, whose inscriptions describe, time and again, victory over a major rebellion that threatened the overthrow of his kingdom (Michalowski forthcoming). Other Old Babylonian dynasties took a different approach to monumental writing. At Larsa, a city that controlled a substantial territory until its defeat by Hammurabi, inscriptions were composed in a highly poetic style that blurred generic distinctions between hymns and monumental texts (Brisch 2007). Indeed, similar examples come from cities such as Isin, where texts we would characterize as hymns were apparently inscribed on monuments. Thus scribes working for Old Babylonian polities approached monumental writing in different ways; some presented themselves to contemporary and future readers as propagators of textual novelty while others also invoked the past as a paradigmatic reference to justify claims to dominion and power. Some combined tradition with innovation to mark their own original place in the stream of tradition.

The Poetics of History

Our short survey has, until now, focused on early Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and year-names; as important as these are, they represent only part of the history-writing of the times. The other locus of such discourse is to be found in the literary texts of the late third and early second millennium, written in the Sumerian language. As already noted, the literary stream of tradition was reinvented under the kings of Ur who probably initiated the setting aside of most of the earlier Sumerian mythological poetic corpus and replaced it with a highly politicized set of texts that reflected the ideological concerns of the state and were centered on the person of the king. These new texts constituted the core of a literary tradition that was sifted and redacted over the next two centuries; some texts were discarded, new ones added, and all of them were rewritten to conform to eighteenth-century grammatical and orthographic norms. Only a few dozen Ur III manuscripts of such texts have been found to-date, and the majority remains unpublished (Rubio 2000). They are known to us mainly in copies made by students in Old Babylonian schools, primarily from the cities of Nippur, Ur, and Sippar, but also from a handful of other places.

The documentation is marred by a temporal disjunction, as we cannot establish the changes that took place between the end of the Ur III period and the eighteenth-century school copies. All interpretation thus must take into account the alterity of the copies and their multiple functions as witnesses to older traditions as well as to contemporary Babylonian concerns and reinterpretations. Since so many of the Old Babylonian literary texts originated in earlier times, it is a matter of discretion and interpretation which ones should be considered part of writing history. Must we see all of the thirty or so hymns associated with Ur III kings as witnesses to a concern for history? One cannot rule out such an approach, but to do so would extend this survey into a major history of Sumerian literature. More narrowly, I will focus attention on a small set of five widely copied sets of compositions that are concerned with the interpretation of critical historical events of the Ur III dynasty as well as the fall of Akkad:

1. The *Sumerian King List* (*SKL*) and related compositions
2. The *Curse of Agade* (*CA*)
3. The *Death of Ur-Namma* (*DU*)
4. The *Correspondence of the Kings of Ur* (*CKU*)
5. The *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (*LSUr*)

All of them go back, in some form, to Ur III times or slightly later and can be studied as documents of their time, but when read together in aggregate as Old Babylonian compositions, they tell a new story that sheds light on how eighteenth-century Mesopotamians thought of their past and how they meditated on the mechanism of history. In the discussion that follows I have listed them by their modern names. The ancients referred to them by first line only.

1 The Sumerian King List (SKL)

The text that is often considered the paradigmatic early Mesopotamian historical text is the *Sumerian King List*.[9] Like most literary compositions in the Sumerian language, it is known from multiple copies made by schoolchildren in the eighteenth century, but the earliest known manuscript is two hundred years older, from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur; this is probably when it was composed, although some would prefer to ascribe it to the period when Akkad ruled the land (Steinkeller 2003). The text begins with divine sanction of terrestrial power: when kingship was handed down from the heavens. This kingship is granted to only one city at a time. Sections contain lists of kings of the ruling city over a specific period, with year counts for individual reigns as well as summaries for each dynastic turn. Some versions begin with seven cities that ruled before the great flood, and then, after the deluge had swept over the land, continue with new dynasties (Hallo 1963). The earliest kings have fantastically long reigns, but as historical time approaches, the numbers become more realistic: the progress of numbers marks a conscious advancement from myth to history.

Although it is simply a list, the *SKL*, more than any other early Mesopotamian composition, creates a sense of deep historical time and locates the present in a long mundane stream of hegemony and power. As a historical source it is of little value, at least as far as early periods are concerned, because the text is firmly rooted in the fictional notion of Mesopotamia as a single, unified polity that was always ruled from one city by one king who belonged to a specific dynasty. This is the vision of the state as seen from the vantage point of Akkad and Ur. As far as we know, in the time before 1500 such unity covered no more than 300 years in aggregate. The *SKL* describes an imperial ideal rather than an actual state of affairs in the land; it therefore constitutes a perfect example of the use of history not as a disinterested depiction of the past but for the purposes of legitimating present politics.

In the *SKL* the notion of a single unified hegemonic state is projected into the past, erasing the history of small independent and coexisting polities. In the native languages this concept is encapsulated by the Sumerian term *bala*, Akkadian *palû*, literally "turn," as in the way a spindle goes round and round. The idea is not unique to the *SKL* but expressed in more explicit ways elsewhere. One such text is the *Sumerian Sargon Legend*, an eighteenth-century composition that describes the rise to power of the founder of the Dynasty of Akkad (Cooper and Heimpel 1983). According to this tale, Sargon had served as a cupbearer at the court of the king of the city of Kish, the reigning polity of the time. The *Legend* is incomplete, but one critical passage explains the thinking that drives the narrative (*Sumerian Sargon Legend* 5'–8'; Cooper and Heimpel 1983: 76):

> So that the house of Kish, (which had been) like a haunted town, would be
>   turned back into a (proper) settlement,
> Its king, shepherd Ur-Zababa,
> Rose like the sun over the House of Kish.
> (But) An and Enlil, by their holy command, authoritatively [ordered]
> That his royal reign (*bala*) be alienated, that the palace's prosperity(?) be removed.

Kingship may have come down from the heavens, but the imperial "turn" is clearly associated with the two principal gods of the pantheon, An and Enlil. Divine sanction aside, there is some evidence that this concept of dynastic succession was not only enshrined in literature, but was part of a more broadly shared ideology, as witnessed by a unique document from the time of the penultimate king of the Old Babylonian dynasty, Ammisaduqa (1646–1626), that contains a prayer to be offered as part of the royal cult of the dead. The invocation is addressed to the dead ancestors of Ammisaduqa's lineage, as well as to those of other contemporary reigning groups, all of which are described with the term *bala* (Finkelstein 1966).[10]

2 The Curse of Agade (CA)

This motif is taken over by the *Curse of Agade*, an elaborate poem that describes the fall of the Old Akkadian state, which begins with the words (lines 1–7; Cooper 1983a: 51):

> After Enlil's frown (of displeasure)
> Had slaughtered Kish, as if it were the Bull of Heaven,
> Had ground the House of the Land of Uruk like a mighty bull,
> And when at that time upon Sargon, king of Akkad,
> Enlil, from north to south,
> Had bestowed sovereignty and kingship,
> Then …

Although the composition was written at most a century after the events it describes, the narrative of the fall of the House of Sargon is pure fiction, twisting real events in an unrecognizable manner. The action takes place during the reign of King Naram-Sin (2254–2218), when the kingdom was at the apex of its power.[11] We know that his son, Shar-kali-sharri (2217–2193), held the throne for at least seventeen years, followed by at least three or four more rulers, and so the dating of the drama is patently false. In the poem Enlil, the main god of Sumer, withdraws and becomes silent, thus taking away his protection of the kingdom. Naram-Sin sees the destruction of his realm in a dream; in desperation he withdraws and is inactive for seven years, in a sense reflecting Enlil's behavior in the mundane world. The king then seeks omens to rebuild the main shrine of Sumer, dedicated to Enlil, but cannot obtain a favorable answer. In anger, the king of Akkad tears down the temple, and thus enrages Enlil, who sends down the barbarian Gutians from the eastern mountains to put an end to the realm. We know that this description of events is simply false: inscriptions, year-names, and administrative documents from the time of Naram-Sin and of his son and successor Shar-kali-sharri document extensive work on Enlil's temple, which was rebuilt and adorned with precious stones and metals (A. Westenholz 1987: 24–27). In the poem this elaborate undertaking is assigned to an earlier reign and reinterpreted as a sacrilegious destructive act.

The literature of the early second millennium reflects a tension between a reestablished primeval world order and the often capricious intervention of the gods, primarily that of Enlil. In the divine hierarchy this deity is second in command to the sky god An, who is less active in worldly affairs. The imbalances created by Enlil are usually set right by An and Enlil in tandem, or by the decision of the seven main deities of the pantheon. In *CA*, Enlil's whimsical withdrawal of favor from Naram-Sin is presented without any explanation or justification; it simply happens, as in the *SKL*, signaling the unpredictable nature of history. But this poem adds another narrative element to the chance nature of events: the hubris of a ruler who does not accept, or perhaps does not fully understand, the ways of the gods. From the point of view of history, three main problems need to be addressed: why was a positive act recast as an impious desecration, what was the meaning of Enlil's seemingly inexplicable actions, and, finally, why was such a blatant rewriting of history acceptable to readers who might have been well aware of the actual history of the fall of Akkad?

3 The Death of Ur-Namma (DU)

In the historical vision represented by the *SKL*, the dynasty of Akkad was followed by a period of disorder, when there was no clear answer to the question of "who was king, who was not king?," and then foreigners with strange names, known to Mesopotamians as Gutians, ruled the land. Such people and their kings are attested in contemporary inscriptions and documents, as are local rulers in places such as Lagash and Umma, but almost all of them are ignored by the *SKL*. Indeed, every single known manuscript of the list contains a somewhat different set of Gutian rulers. The Gutians were ejected by a king by the name of Utuhegal, but then the composition turns to the next dynasty in its relentless recounting of hegemonic rule: the Third Dynasty of Ur, founded by Ur-Namma. Within a few years the new king created a powerful territorial state, but his reign lasted only eighteen years. For reasons that are still unclear, his demise, which may have resulted from a battle wound, initiated unusually strong symbolic and emotional reactions that motivated the composition of a unique poem, the *Death of Ur-Namma* (*DU*; Flückiger-Hawker 1999). There is nothing like it in Sumerian literature, in which the death of kings appears to be taboo, although the poem must be read in tandem with a composition about the *Death of Gilgamesh* that describes the final moments and burial of an ancient semidivine king of Uruk who was invoked as a patron figure of the Ur III dynasty and played an important role in the self-representational strategies of Ur-Namma and his successors (Veldhuis 2001).

The narrative of the *Death of Ur-Namma* cannot be fully reconstructed as yet due to the survival of relatively few manuscripts, but the general outlines of the story are fairly comprehensible: evil has struck Sumer, as its shepherd has been laid low because An, without any explicit reason, has changed his word, and Enlil has deceitfully taken back the fate that he had previously established. All the main gods and goddesses withdraw and calamities prevail throughout the land, as the king lies suffering. The poet cries out: "Why have they abandoned Ur-Namma, like a broken jar, where he was slaughtered/murdered?" The translation of this crucial line is uncertain, but if we follow this interpretation we must conclude that he was mortally wounded in battle or perhaps even assassinated. Ur-Namma is buried and takes the long road to the Netherworld where he makes offerings to all the divine rulers of his new resting place, but when the funerary wailing of Sumer reaches him there he cries out a long, bitter wail, lamenting his premature demise and ending with a complaint against the gods.

4 The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur (CKU)

Enlil's duplicity is also manifest, albeit in an oblique manner, in the *Correspondence of the Kings of Ur* – a collection of twenty-four letters to and from rulers of the Ur III dynasty (Michalowski 2011a). Like the other literary school texts discussed here, these are attested in later copies, but unlike *SKL* and *CA*, for which Ur III

manuscripts exist as well, there is not a single exemplar of these letters that is not Old Babylonian in date. As a result, opinions diverge concerning the authenticity of this correspondence, ranging from claims of total forgery (Huber 2001) to acceptance of almost all the letters as genuine (Hallo 2006). Moreover, the texts have a complicated redactional history, and not all of them were known in one place at any one time. Some of them probably go back to Ur III originals, but it is impossible to gauge the level of rewriting and reinterpretation that took place over the centuries, and therefore their use as historical sources is somewhat dubious; but as witnesses to eighteenth-century notions of history they are invaluable. Unlike most of the compositions discussed here, with one exception they are written in prose, and their imitation of documentary texts imbues them with both authority and a semblance of verisimilitude that seeks to transcend literariness.

The largest part of the correspondence is ascribed to King Shulgi (2094–2047), Ur-Namma's son and successor. Most letters concern the relationship between the monarch and his high vizier or prime minister, named Aradmu, whose real career, spanning the reign of four kings, can be traced in authentic Ur III documentation. Two sets of letters, one from the time of Shulgi, and one from the reign of his second successor, Shu-Sin, describe problems connected with the construction and maintenance of two separate walls or lines of fortifications that were ostensibly built to repel attacks from enemy tribes from the east but were in fact primarily intended for offensive purposes. Some of the information provided by these letters is quite precise. Little of it can be directly substantiated from Ur III materials, but what there is, as well as conjecture derived from circumstantial evidence, does not contradict any of the information contained in these epistles.

The final four letters of *CKU*, concerning events from the reign of Ibbi-Sin (2028–2004) when the Ur III state collapsed and was overrun by enemies from Iran, are the most complex of all the *CKU* missives. Not only were most of them fabricated long after the fall of Ur, but they also circulated in different versions, some of which clearly have further additions. This was a tradition that was constantly in flux. On one tablet of unknown provenance, all four missives were copied together to create, in aggregate, something that we might designate, anachronistically to be sure, as a form of epistolary novel. The narrated events all presage the end of Ibbi-Sin's kingdom, but underlying the military and economic issues that are the main topic of the letters is a debate about divine protection and historical intent. The king, trying to convince one of his generals to remain faithful and to reject attempts to lure him into the camp of his opponent, claims that the gods have given him omens signifying that "my enemy shall be destroyed, he shall be given over to my hand" (Michalowski 2006a). The god Enlil has guaranteed Ibbi-Sin's victory, and to press the issue home, the king actually describes the features on the sheep's liver used for this act of divination. This part is a late addition, but it is important for its uniqueness, as there is no other such description in all of Sumerian literature; indeed, the technical vocabulary of divination was all Akkadian in this period, and the scribe actually had to invent equivalent Sumerian terminology.

The omen draws unusual attention to itself precisely because the Old Babylonian reader, armed with hindsight, knows that it is wrong on all fronts, because, as literati were well aware, Ibbi-Sin's realm fell soon after this omen was supposedly sent by the gods. According to one much later ominous source, the abandoned king was carried off in captivity to the land of Anshan in Iran, never to return. This counterfactual historical knowledge, derived from *SKL*, the *LSUr*, and other sources, guaranteed a subversive reading of the *CKU*, or at least of the part constituted by the Ibbi-Sin correspondence, and was also motivated by the Old Babylonian omens that associated certain configurations of the divinatory innards of sheep with Ibbi-Sin and with disaster, destruction, and revolt (Glassner 1997: 109–11). The discrepancy between certain parts of the *CKU* and the rest of the historical tradition could imply a number of different interpretations: the diviner was wrong or he lied, the king was wrong or he lied, or, most importantly, the gods deliberately misled the king of Ur. The correspondence, in harmony with other literature, plays with the notion of the aleatoric nature of history, driven by the caprices of the gods. But in portraying kings as deliberate and limited in their power and decision-making by the vagaries of events, it also provides a counterbalance to the poetic literature, in which they appear as infallible, perfect and superhuman creatures who can do no wrong.

5 *The* Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur (LSUr)

This text describes the collapse of the Ur III state in highly dramatic poetic language and utilizes the concept of the *bala* to provide an explicit justification for the change of power in the land, in the words of the god Enlil, addressed to his son, the moon god, whose city was Ur (Michalowski 1989: 59; Attinger 2009: 16):

> There is no going back on the final verdict, the ruling of the (divine) assembly,
> The word of divine An and Enlil knows no overturning,
> Although Ur was given kingship, it was not given an eternal reign (*bala*);
> From time immemorial, since humanity was established until (now) as the population multiplied,
> Who has ever seen a reign (*bala*) of kingship that would take precedence (forever)?
> Its kingship's reign (*bala*) has been alienated, but why should this worry you?

In the texts cited above, issues of history are not addressed directly, but are played out by means of intertextual allusions and contradictions. More problematic, in this respect, is a set of Sumerian poems that sing of the deeds of three legendary kings of the city of Uruk: Emerkar, Lugalbanda, and Gilgamesh (Alster 1990; Michalowski 2010). This literary tradition most probably originated in Ur III times, although there is an older poem concerning Lugalbanda, as already mentioned above. A handful of Ur III compositions concerning Lugalbanda and Gilgamesh survive, and it is clear that by Old Babylonian times the tradition had

been thoroughly reworked. Nevertheless, it seems more than probable that these texts began life in the context of a broad-ranging project to provide a form of literary legitimation of Ur III royalty. The complexity of this material precludes any discussion within the confines of a brief survey, but two of five Gilgamesh poems in the Sumerian language – some would refer to them as epics – are noteworthy in the context of an essay on historical writing: the *Death of Gilgamesh* as well as *Gilgamesh and Huwawa* (Edzard 1990, 1991, 1993). The former may have been part of a complex ideological project centered on the concept of divine kingship, initiated when Ur-Namma's son Shulgi proclaimed himself a god in the aftermath of a state crisis precipitated by the death of his father. As such, it is related to the composition about the *Death of Ur-Namma*, discussed above.

The story of *Gilgamesh and Huwawa* is perhaps more pertinent to our topic: it deals with an expedition to the east, to fell "cedars" (more probably junipers) in a land guarded by an enormous supernatural creature called Huwawa, but its motivation is not simply materialistic: it is to "establish a name." The semidivine hero, Gilgamesh, undertakes this expedition to find glory and immortality by performing deeds that will be remembered for all time, thus defining, in the most explicit terms, the roles of text, memory, and history in early Mesopotamian tradition (*Gilgamesh and Huwawa A* 5–7; Edzard 1990: 183):

> I want to enter the mountains; I want to establish my name,
> Where names have already been set down, I want to set down my name,
> Where names have not yet been set down, I want to set down the name of
>   the gods!

While a full discussion cannot be provided here, it is worth noting that the *SKL*, as well as the poetic historical compositions, function differently from the "epic" materials. While the former utilize deep historical time to provide sanction and support for a specific abstract notion of kingship – one that, for lack of a better word, might be termed imperial – the latter use it to legitimate a more narrowly defined concept of divine royal authority.

This poetic historical vision is present in texts that are central to the Old Babylonian educational establishments in cities such as Nippur, Ur, and Isin, but there are also other early Mesopotamian texts that require some comment in this context. Among these are lists of year-names, some covering whole "dynasties," while others are more limited in scope, though their context and function are less than clear, since only a few of them come from school environments.

They may have been used occasionally in peripheral education, but some of them may bear witness to some form of antiquarian interests. It is unlikely that Old Babylonian scribes compiled these lists from old dated documents, as they would not have known how to arrange them in chronological order; hence they must have been based on older versions that have not been recovered. These year lists are important because they transform individual year-names into components of a larger historical narrative, as Hayden White (1987) demonstrated many years ago

on the basis of similar Old English sources. They tell stories of royal achievements in limited areas of interest, but as narratives they prefigure later chronicle texts.

Old Babylonian scribes also left behind copies of monumental inscriptions from Old Akkadian and Ur III times but, as is the case with date lists, this was not part of the central curriculum. As noted above, copies of Old Akkadian royal inscriptions have been found among school texts in Nippur and Ur, taken, it would seem, directly from the monuments, as they contain annotations indicating the location of certain captions on statues or stelae. Moreover, the copyists were at pains to imitate the old monumental script and did not render the cuneiform signs in their contemporary Old Babylonian forms. Hardly any traces of the originals have survived, so these copies are important to the modern historian, but it must be stressed that they may have been the work of a few isolated teachers and students and do not represent a general investigative trend of the time. Much the same can be said about Old Babylonian school copies of Ur III inscriptions, mostly limited to a collection of commemorative texts from the time of King Shu-Sin, already mentioned earlier, that were collected by someone in Nippur. The exact spots where these copies were found are unknown, and it cannot be ruled out that they also represent the work of one scribe or the interests of one particular teacher.

Legends of the Kings of Akkad

Mesopotamian education of the eighteenth century was almost entirely focused on the classical Sumerian language which had long ceased to be spoken in the streets. At the same time there is evidence for new literary developments in a poetic version of the Akkadian language that was the primary spoken tongue of the time (Wasserman 2003). Few of these Akkadian compositions come from excavations, and therefore it is difficult to evaluate their social context, but it seems fairly certain that this new development was still not part of the core traditional educational centers in cities such as Nippur and Ur, even if a handful of Akkadian-language literary texts have been found in these sites as well. Among these new texts is a group of compositions that describe the deeds, trials, and tribulations of the two most prominent kings of the Dynasty of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin (J. Westenholz 1997). This tradition, which may have earlier roots, is extensively elaborated in post-Old Babylonian times, when it is fully integrated into the literary stream of tradition, often acquiring new symbolism and new intertextual meaning.

These new Old Babylonian fictions differ in tone and content from the Sumerian traditions about these two kings that were discussed briefly above. Because the Akkadian compositions are known only in single, usually incomplete manuscripts, it is evident that this was a new literary development that was still in a state of flux and which owed little to past creativity. The Sargon compositions portray him as a vigorous military leader "beloved of (the war goddess) Ishtar, who roamed throughout the four corners (of the universe)" (J. Westenholz 1997: 35). Unlike

the Sumerian kings, who appear in literature as singular, omnipotent, and sometimes even as divine monarchs, Sargon is portrayed as a warlord who lives with, and takes advice from, his troops as they plan wars and march to the ends of the world for glory. The texts mention certain real geographical locations, but the accent rests on the difficulties encountered in the attempt to fulfill Sargon's great ambition to achieve what no one has ever done before. In the words that he addresses to his own soldiers: "And so, any king who would try to equal me, wherever I have gone, let him also go!" (J. Westenholz 1997: 77).

The extant material about Naram-Sin is more varied in content and ideologically more complex, but this may be an accident of discovery. The Old Babylonian literary works concerning this king often mix myth and mundane history, extolling his military prowess, but also his all too human destiny. Naram-Sin was worshiped as a god during the last years of his reign, but in the Old Babylonian tradition his mortality is one of the characteristics of his literary persona. This is most prominently displayed in the *Elegy on the Death of Naram-Sin* – the only early Mesopotamian portrayal of royal demise in the Akkadian language, but one that has little in common with the Sumerian poems that describe the death of Ur-Namma and Gilgamesh (J. Westenholz 1997: 203–20).

Perhaps the most fascinating texts concerning Sargon's grandson are a set of compositions that deal with the Great Revolt. In this case we have a constellation of texts of various types that recycle a set of historical motifs, refracted in the prisms of the literary imaginations of different places and different times. According to copies of authentic Naram-Sin inscriptions, at some time towards the end of his reign he faced a major revolt that threatened to destroy the hegemony of Akkad (J. Westenholz 1997: 35), and at least five different inscriptions describe him as "Naram-Sin, the mighty one, king of the four corners (of the universe), victor in nine battles in the course of one year" (ibid. 77). The threat was so grave that the people of his kingdom pronounced him a god in gratitude for his victory over the rebels, and already in Old Akkadian times this revolt became the stuff of literature, as documented in a fragmentary school text from the period.

Whether in imitation of earlier texts or from a study of royal monuments that were still standing in temple courtyards, Old Babylonian scribes reworked these stories into a set of compositions that contain closely related variations on a common stock of themes. Three such creations survive, all from different cities, and a fragmentary fourth one – almost a coda, one might say – describes how after nine battles, "for the tenth time they rose up against me!" This particular version ends with a curse formula, and here for the first time we encounter a genre that would be more important in later times: the first-person literary narrative of an ancient king that is couched in the form of a monumental inscription.

The most widely circulated composition concerning Sargon's grandson is the *Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin* or, as it has been renamed by its most recent editor, *Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes* (J. Westenholz 1997: 263–368). The Old Babylonian version, while still fragmentary, may have been as long as 600 lines, but the later redactions are more than two-thirds shorter. The first-millennium story,

which is complete, is a highly literary creation, filled with references and allusions to other compositions, and highly didactic in tone. It describes how an earlier legendary king, Enmerkar, had offended the gods by not heeding omens and was punished for this; most importantly, he did not leave a written record of his experiences so that future kings, including Naram-Sin, could learn from his example. The king of Akkad had to face an attack by seven other-worldly kings who had devastated much of the kingdom; much as in the *Curse of Agade*, Naram-Sin seeks omens, with no result, so he decides to take matters into his own hands and to go on the attack, but the results are disastrous, and none of the tens of thousands of soldiers he sends out against them come back alive. Chastened and despondent, the Akkadian ruler seeks omens once more, and finally receives orders forbidding him to destroy the demonic host, which, it turns out, has been created by the gods for the purpose of punishment, as they are forever "at the disposal of the angry heart of Enlil."

Naram-Sin inscribes the text in stone and places it in a temple for future generations to read, admonishing future monarchs to love their wives and strengthen their kingdoms, but also to "tie up your weapons and set (them) in the corners," to ignore any enemies who might ravage their lands, and to follow Naram-Sin's example by adding a written account of their own lives to the one he left behind. In this composition, characters and events from the past are mixed in with mythological and magical traditions to create a new form of literary history in which the hubris of kings is tempered by self-reflection and reluctant subordination to divine will, ending with a surprising renunciation of violence that comes from the mouth of an ancient king whose name is otherwise a traditional personification of martial ferocity. In the first millennium the paradigmatic status of the written tradition was extolled in many texts, and therefore the admonition to leave written testimony ties into the ethos of the time; but it is not clear how these motifs were developed in the Old Babylonian versions, as these texts are broken in the relevant moments of the narrative.

The Old Babylonian stories about the kings of Akkad carry many messages, but the most salient aspects that stand out are the transient nature of glory and the fragility of royal power based on military might. This contrasts in striking ways with the strident, unequivocal self-representational strategies of kings such as Sargon and Naram-Sin, as they are known to us, and were known to eighteenth-century Mesopotamians, from their original monuments and inscriptions. As history-making, these stories, although seemingly quite different, dovetail with the Sumerian poetic tradition concerning Akkad and the kings of Ur that concentrates on the aleatoric character of the flow of mundane history and the unpredictability of divine direction of events: the fickle nature of gods like Enlil and the dubious reliability of omens which are the standard system of communication from the transcendent world. Nevertheless, the contemporary "establishment" continued to represent violence as a measure of royal success, and even exploited this kind of literary representation by alluding to kings of old in inscriptions and other texts, in which appeal to tradition contributed to legitimation. In Old Babylonian times,

schooling, and therefore much of what we consider Sumerian and Akkadian literature, was mostly a private elite affair, as far as we can presently determine, independent of the main institutions of power. It is therefore difficult to establish whether the past, used as a vessel for questioning contemporary norms, functioned as a locus of subversive discourse and as a canvas for questioning the established worldview. It is equally possible that for the small number of people who could read and write, the present and the past worked in tandem in a more complex dialectical manner, providing opportunities for communication that escape us, as we search for apparent contradictions detected by modern sensibilities.

For some, historical achievements were but wind. A poem best known from later versions, but which originated in Old Babylonian times (the *Ballad of Early Heroes*), finds the past ephemeral and of no importance. It enumerates some of the kings from *SKL* and other Sumerian literary traditions, commenting on the transitional and futile nature of their achievements, and in one version recommending, at the very end, the solace of the Beer Goddesses' embrace.[12]

> Where is King Alulu, who reigned 36,000 years?
> Where is King Etana, the man who ascended to the heavens?
> Where is Huwawa, who was captured in . . . ?
> Where is Enkidu, whose strength . . . in the homeland?
> Where are those kings, the foremost of days of old?
> They are no longer engendered, no longer born,
> Like the remote heavens, I cannot overtake them,
> Like the deep Netherworld, no one can know them, life, in all its form, is but
>   an illusion."

Abbreviations

JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
N.A.B.U.	*Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires*
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*

Notes

1   All dates are BCE. Dates are not precise; they follow the list prepared by J.A. Brinkman for Oppenheim 1977: 335–48. The dates are probably too high, as many currently recognize, but this remains the standard chronology at present.
2   For general historical background, see Liverani 1988; van de Mieroop 2007.
3   An earlier version of this essay appeared as Michalowski 2011a.
4   The inscriptions of all the kings of Lagash and of other rulers of the Early Dynastic Period have been collected in Frayne 2004. For English translations see Cooper 1986: 22–85; the most important analysis is still Cooper 1983b.

5   A full analysis of these narratives and of their novel status as historical writings can be found in Cooper 1983b.

6   For reconstructions of what these monuments may have looked like, see Buccellati 1993.

7   The Sargonic royal inscriptions are collected in Frayne 1993.

8   For the historical background, see Charpin 2004; the inscriptions are collected in Frayne 1990.

9   The classic edition is Jacobsen 1939. Many studies have appeared, e.g., Wilcke 1988, 1989; Glassner 2004: 117–126; Glassner 2005. For a recent appraisal with earlier bibliography, see Marchesi 2010.

10 There are at least two other compositions that take their inspiration from *SKL*: the *Tumal Chronicle* (Michalowski 2006b) and the *Rulers of Lagash* (Sollberger 1967). These are not considered here.

11 On the Akkad dynasty, see A. Westenholz 1999. The historiography of this time is discussed by various authors in Liverani 1983.

12 This text exists in a number of redactions from various times. For an edition, see Alster 2005: 288–322.

References

Alster, B. 1990. "Lugalbanda and the Early Epic Tradition in Mesopotamia." In T. Abusch, J. Huehnergard, and P. Steinkeller (eds.), *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, 59–72. Atlanta.

Alster, B. 2005. *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer*. Bethesda, MD.

Attinger, P. 2009. La lamentation sur Sumer et Ur. Web publication, http://www.arch. unibe.ch/content/ueber_uns/pascal_attinger/traductions/index_ger.html#e9185 [accessed July 2013].

Benjamin, W. 1968. *Illuminations*. New York.

Brisch, N.M. 2007. *Tradition and the Poetics of Innovation: Sumerian Court Literature of the Larsa Dynasty (c. 2003–1763 BCE)*. Münster.

Buccellati, G. 1993. "Through a Tablet Darkly: A Reconstruction of Old Akkadian Monuments Described in Old Babylonian Copies." In M.E. Cohen, D.C. Snell, and D.B. Weisberg (eds.), *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo*, 58–71. Bethesda, MD.

Charpin, D. 2004. "Histoire politique du Proche-Orient Amorrite (2002–1595)." In D. Charpin, D.O. Edzard, and M. Stol, *Mesopotamien. Die altbabylonische Zeit*, 25–480. Fribourg and Göttingen.

Civil, M. 1967. "Šū-Sîn's Historical Inscriptions: Collection B." *JCS* 21: 24–38.

Cooper, J.S. 1983a. *The Curse of Agade*. Baltimore.

Cooper, J.S. 1983b. *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border*. Malibu.

Cooper, J.S. 1986. *Presargonic Inscriptions*. New Haven.

Cooper, J.S ., and W. Heimpel. 1983. "The Sumerian Sargon Legend." *JAOS* 103: 67–82.

Edzard, D.O. 1990. "Gilgamesh und Huwawa A. I. Teil." *ZA* 80: 165–203.

Edzard, D.O. 1991. "Gilgamesh und Huwawa A. II. Teil." *ZA* 81: 165–233.

Edzard, D.O. 1993. "Gilgamesh und Huwawa. Zwei Versionen der sumerischen Zedernwaldepisode nebst einer Edition von Version 'B'." *SB Bayer. Akad. der Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl.* 1–61.

Feldherr, A., and G. Hardy (eds.). 2011. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing,* I: *Beginnings to* AD *600.* Oxford.

Finkelstein, J.J. 1966. "Genealogy of the Hammurabi Dynasty." *JCS* 20: 95–118.

Flückiger-Hawker, E. 1999. *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition.* Fribourg.

Frayne, D.R. 1990. *Old Babylonian Period, 2003–1595 BC.* Toronto.

Frayne, D.R. 1993. *Sargonic and Gutian Periods, 2334–2113 BC.* Toronto.

Frayne, D.R. 1997. *Ur III Period, 2112–2004 BC.* Toronto.

Frayne, D.R. 2004. *Presargonic Period, 2700–2350 BC.* Toronto.

Glassner, J.-J. 1997. "L'historien mésopotamien et l'événement." *Mètis* 12: 97–117.

Glassner, J.-J. 2004. *Mesopotamian Chronicles.* Atlanta.

Glassner, J.-J. 2005. "La chronique de la monarchie une et l'écriture de l'histoire à la fin du 3e millénaire." *N.A.B.U.* 2005 no. 2: 51–52.

Hallo, W.W. 1963. "Beginning and End of the Sumerian King List in the Nippur Recension." *JCS* 17: 52–57.

Hallo, W.W. 2006. "A Sumerian Apocryphon? The Royal Correspondence of Ur Revisited." In Michalowski and Veldhuis 2006: 85–104.

Huber, F. 2001. "La Correspondance royale d'Ur: Un corpus apocryphe." *ZA* 91: 169–206.

Jacobsen, T. 1939. *The Sumerian King List.* Chicago.

Jacobsen, T. 1989. "Lugalbanda and Ninsuna." *JCS* 4: 69–86.

Krebernik, M. 1998. "Die Texte aus Fāra und Tel Abū Salābīh." In J. Bauer, R.K. Englund, and M. Krebernik, *Mesopotamien: Späturuk-Zeit und frühdynastische Zeit*, 237–427. Fribourg and Göttingen.

Liverani, M. (ed.). 1983. *Akkad: The First World Empire.* Padua.

Liverani, M. 1988. *Antico Oriente: Storia, Società, Economia.* Rome.

Liverani, M. 2011. "Later Mesopotamia." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011: 29–51.

Marchesi, G. 2010. "The Sumerian King List and the Early History of Mesopotamia." *Quaderni di Vicino Oriente* 5: 197–215.

Michalowski, P. 1989. *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur.* Winona Lake, IN.

Michalowski, P. 1999. "Commemoration, Writing, and Genre in Ancient Mesopotamia." In C. Shuttleworth Kraus (ed.), *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*, 69–90. Leiden.

Michalowski, P. 2006a. "How to Read the Liver? In Sumerian." In A.K. Guinan, M. de J. Ellis, A.J. Ferrara, et al. (eds.), *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty*, 247–58. Leiden.

Michalowski, P. 2006b. "The Strange History of Tumal," In Michalowski and Veldhuis 2006: 145–66.

Michalowski, P. 2010. "Maybe Epic: The Origins and Reception of Sumerian Heroic Poetry." In D. Konstan and K.A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Epic and History*, 7–25. Oxford.

Michalowski, P. 2011a. *The Correspondence of the Kings of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom.* Winona Lake, IN.

Michalowski, P. 2011b. "Early Mesopotamia." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011: 5–23.

Michalowski, P. 2012. "Knowledge and its Avatars: A Reconsideration of the Place of Literacy in Early Mesopotamian Culture." In W.S. van Egmond and W.H. van Soldt (eds.), *Theory and Practice of Knowledge Transfer: Studies in School Education in the Ancient Near East and Beyond*, 39–57. Leiden.

Michalowski, P. Forthcoming. *The Birth of Literature and the Death of Kings.*

Michalowski, P., and N. Veldhuis (eds.). 2006. *Approaches to Sumerian Literature: Studies in Honor of Stip (H. L. J. Vanstiphout).* Leiden.

Olmstead, A.T. 1918. "The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur Nasir Apal." *JAOS* 38: 209–63.

Oppenheim, A.L. 1977. *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization.* Chicago.

Roth, M.T. 2000. *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor.* Atlanta.

Rubio, G. 2000. "On the Orthography of the Sumerian Literary Texts from the Ur III Period." *Acta Sumerologica* 22: 203–25.

Sallaberger, W. 1999. "Ur III-Zeit." In Sallaberger and Westenholz 1999: 121–392.

Sallaberger, W., and A. Westenholz. 1999. *Mesopotamien. Akkade-Zeit und Ur III-Zeit.* Fribourg and Göttingen.

Sollberger, E. 1967. The Rulers of Lagaš. *JCS* 21: 279–91.

Steinkeller, P. 2003. "An Ur III Manuscript of the Sumerian King List." In W. Sallaberger, K. Volk, and A. Zgoll (eds.), *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke*, 267–92. Wiesbaden.

Steinkeller, P. Forthcoming. An Archaic "Prisoner Plaque" from Kiš.

van de Mieroop, M. 2007. *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323* BC. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Veldhuis, N. 2001. "The Solution of the Dream: A New Interpretation of Bilgames' Death." *JCS* 53: 133–48.

Wasserman, N. 2003. *Style and Form in Old Babylonian Literary Texts.* Leiden.

Westenholz, A. 1987. *Old Sumerian and Old Akkadian Texts in Philadelphia*, II. Copenhagen.

Westenholz, A. 1999. "The Old Akkadian Period: History and Culture." In Sallaberger and Westenholz 1999: 17–117.

Westenholz, J.G. 1997. *Legends of the Kings of Akkade: The Texts.* Winona Lake, IN.

White, H. 1987. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." In White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, 1–25. Baltimore.

Wilcke, Claus. 1988. "Die Sumerische Königsliste und erzählte Vergangenheit." In J. von Ungern-Sternberg and H. Reinau (eds.), *Vergangenheit in mündlicher Überlieferung*, 113–40. Stuttgart.

Wilcke, Claus. 1989. "Genealogical and Geographical Thought in the Sumerian King List." In H. Behrens, D Loding, and M.T. Roth (eds.), *DUMU-E2-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*, 557–71. Philadelphia.

Wilcke, Claus. 2007. *Early Near Eastern Law: A History of its Beginnings: The Early Dynastic and Sargonic Periods.* Winona Lake, IN.

"Two Old Tablets": Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in Hittite Society

Theo van den Hout

Setting the Stage: A Brief Overview of Hittite History

"The Hittite librarians were orderly people." This is how the French Hittitologist Emmanuel Laroche (1949: 7; my trans.) once characterized those responsible for the large tablet collections on which we base much of our knowledge of the ruling class that dominated Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) during most of the second millennium BCE.[1] And it is true: their well-kept tablet storage that also includes the history-writing concerning us here, allows us to follow the development of the Hittite state over a period of almost 500 years in ways that are quite unique in the ancient Near East.

Hittite Anatolia enters history when merchants from Assyria around 2000 set up a trading network there.[2] The tin they imported was essential for the local production of bronze while the Assyrians themselves were mainly interested in copper and other precious metals. Judging by the names mentioned in the Assyrian records they left behind, the local population largely consisted of people who spoke Hittite and Luwian, the oldest known members of the Indo-European language family, as well as a non-Indo-European linguistic isolate that we call Hattian. Around the middle of the eighteenth century this network collapsed, coinciding with the short-lived rise under a local king named Anitta of the first state that unified what had thus far been merely a collection of independent city states. His capital was the city of Kanes (also known as Nesa, near modern Kayseri). This fledgling state, however, soon fell victim to internal strife, and after about a century,

Table 9.1 A selection of Hittite kings (according to the Middle Chronology)

Anitta	mid-18th century BCE
Old Hittite Kingdom	
Hattusili I	mid-17th century
Mursili I	circa 1600
Telipinu	circa 1520
Empire	
Tudhaliya I	circa 1420
Suppiluliuma I	circa 1370
Mursili II	1318–1295
Muwatalli II	1295–1274
Hattusili III	1267–circa 1240
Tudhaliya IV	circa 1240–1210
Suppiluliuma II	circa 1210–1180(?)

around 1650, a new unified kingdom emerged under Hattusili I. This marked the beginning of the Hittite Kingdom with its capital Hattusa in central Anatolia that was to rule Anatolia until its demise around 1200. Its kings saw themselves as mortal representatives of the gods (especially the Sun and Storm gods), attaining divine status only at death. For them the state was a family enterprise; hence all the key political, military, judicial, administrative, and religious offices were firmly kept in the hands of members of the royal clan (see table 9.1).

As so many of his successors, Hattusili looked eastwards to Syria for expansion. With its accessible ports and plains, Syria was a natural gateway both to Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. In the second millennium, this territory was time and again heavily contested between the powers of the day: Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and the Hurrian state of Mittani. Around 1595 Hattusili's grandson and immediate successor Mursili I even raided Babylon, putting an end to the dynasty that went back to the great Hammurabi. However, after Mursili Hittite power collapsed, and the state lost all its territorial gains. Not until Telipinu towards the end of the sixteenth century was the kingdom able to reassert itself. He put a temporary end to internal dissension, reorganized the country, and was the first king we know of to expand Hittite influence not so much through blunt force as by mutual agreement laid down in treaties. But his efforts, too, seem not to have lasted long. Again a period of relative weakness set in, although some of his successors continued the treaty tradition.

Around 1420, it was Tudhaliya I who put the Hittite state on the map in a more definitive way. From then on we speak of the Empire period. Tudhaliya reconquered the west of Anatolia and to his reign dates the first mention of Ahhiyawa, a geographical entity now accepted by many as referring to the Mycenean Greeks. In the east he campaigned in Syria and also dealt with the Hurrian kingdom of Mittani. These politics continued under his successors and culminated under Suppiluliuma

I and his son Mursili II in the second half of the fourteenth century. Suppiluliuma ended the independence of the Mittani state, incorporating its western half, and Mursili finally established a firm power base in Karkamis on the Euphrates in Syria. Diplomatic ties in terms of treaties and dynastic marriages existed with Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and (former) Mittani. Their expansion into northern Syria, however, brought the Hittites in direct confrontation with the Egyptians who controlled most of the Levant. After some preliminary skirmishes this eventually led in 1275 to the great battle at Kades in Syria between Mursili's son Muwatalli and the young pharaoh Ramses II. In spite of all these war efforts, the result was basically a continuation of the *status quo ante* with a slight advantage to the Hittites. Never again would the two seek military confrontation. On the contrary, Hattusili III concluded in 1259 the so-called peace treaty with Ramses II and in 1245 a Hittite princess was sent off to become Ramses' principal wife.

Under Hattusili's son Tudhaliya IV Assyria recuperated after a prolonged period of malaise, perhaps profiting from internal dynastic problems on the Hittite side. Although the Assyrian threat eventually dissolved, the Hittite empire broke down not long after, around 1200. Its last known ruler Suppiluliuma II fought what may have been a group of the so-called Sea Peoples. This outside threat can only have been one of several factors, though, that perhaps cumulatively brought down Hittite rule in Asia Minor. In the end the ruling class seems to have decided to give up the capital and may have moved to the southeast, but its final destination remains unknown. If they ever intended to continue their empire elsewhere, they failed: what followed was again a loose collection of city-states, this time in southeast Anatolia and northern Syria where we see certain Hittite traditions continued, but the Hittite empire in Anatolia had come to a definitive end.

The Role of History in Hittite Society

When in the last quarter of the fourteenth century a devastating epidemic was raging through the core of the Hittite lands, King Mursili II naturally attributed it to divine anger. Equally naturally, he looked for the cause of such discontent in the past and ordered an official inquiry:

§3 [The matte]r [of the epidemic] started to weigh [on me] again and I made the go[ds' wrath the subject of an oracle inquiry.] Two [o]ld tablets I f[oun]d. One tablet ab[out an offering to the River Mala: …] … for[me]r kings [had] brought the offering to the River Mala, but [now], for as long as [people have] d[ied] in Hatti-Land since the days of my father, we had never made [the offering] to the River Mala.

§4 The second tablet is about the town of Kurustamma: how the Stormgod of Hatti brought the people of Kurustamma to Egypt and how the Stormgod of Hatti made a treaty for them with the people of Hatti, (and how) they were then put under oath by the Stormgod of Hatti. Now that the people of Hatti and Egypt had been put under oath by the Stormgod, it happened that the people of Hatti turned away and suddenly

> broke the divine oath: my father sent troops and chariots and they attacked Egyptian
> territory, the land of Amqa. And again he sent them and again they attacked! (*KUB* 14.8
> obv. 8–20 w. duplicates; ed. Götze 1933: 208–9, trans. van den Hout 2006: 264)

The king's soul-searching conveniently identified two causes that went back to the days of his father and that at the same time considerably narrowed down the search for documentary evidence in the tablet collections.

Such passages can easily be multiplied and are an illustration of how the past informed the present in Hittite society. This role of history may even be seen as one of its defining traits. Hittite treaties traditionally begin with a historical preamble sketching the relations between the two treaty partners prior to the present moment and – in spite of their obvious bias – these historical introductions are one of our major sources for Hittite history. Political decision-making in general started with a review of the past. This trend began early: the conquest of the settlement of Zalpa in the seventeenth century was legitimized by the almost fairy-tale-like story from a remote past about a Queen of Kanes and her thirty sons and thirty daughters (Hoffner 1997: 181–82). When Hattusili I decided that his grandson should be his successor, he first gave a long and detailed account of why other candidates had proved unworthy (Beckman 2006: 219–22). Half of the *Proclamation of King Telipinu* is devoted to an account of Old Hittite history (Goedegebuure 2006). He uses the political troubles that plagued his predecessors as an argument for wide-ranging reforms in the constitution and in the economic organization of his country. On an administrative level, tablet inventories (often called catalogs or shelf lists) occasionally list "old tablets" on the chancery's shelves. In a religious setting we find evidence of use of the past as well. Several cultic texts mention the use of "old tablets" according to which rituals or celebrations were supposed to be carried out. Dramatic interludes in some rituals use historical material for what might, among other things, have been etiological purposes (most recently Gilan 2001). The dedication of extensive property to the cult of the goddess Istar and the attempt to secure the succession for his own son Tudhaliya resulted in one of the most famous Hittite "historical" texts, the *Apology of Hattusili III*.[3]

In a similar vein and in marked contrast to Mesopotamian practice, Hittite oracles are often more about the past than the future.[4] In the Mesopotamian world all kinds of phenomena bore a one-to-one relation to a near or distant future event. In Hittite society anything deviating from the normal course of events first and foremost signaled the discontent of some deity about a past human error, and oracle techniques were used to identify the angry deity, the past event, and the way to redemption. This brings us back to Mursili searching his own memory for past missteps and ordering his staff to scour the tablet collections and to come up with the relevant documents.

Apart from these clearly rhetorical and practical uses of history, there is a genre that almost looks to be historiography for its own sake. Mursili II, just mentioned, composed two memoirs, the so-called *Ten-Year Annals* describing the first ten years of his reign, and the *Extensive Annals* covering his entire reign. A third work,

a biography of his father and known as the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*, may have served as a prequel to the latter. Mursili's historical prose has often been praised for its sophistication. Our inability to detect very obvious propaganda has earned it a reputation of relative objectivity. Is his work part of a linear development that we can trace both before and after him? Did something like historical prose for its own sake really exist in Hittite society? If not, what function did these compositions have? Before we try to tackle these questions, it is necessary to fit this genre into the whole of Hittite writings that have come down to us.

A Definition of "Hittite Society"

Before we do so, however, it is important to define "Hittite society." By this I mean the ruling elite that left behind the documents on which, together with the noninscribed material, we base our knowledge of Hittite history and culture. Hittite is here nothing more than a linguistic label for what was the official medium of the Hittite state for its internal purposes: all administration in the widest sense of the word was conducted in that language. When and to what extent this linguistic dominance reflected the situation on the ground has been a topic of considerable recent discussion. We can see the Hittite language evolve until at least the earlier thirteenth century. But in that evolution there is incontrovertible evidence for an increasing interference from its closest linguistic relative, Luwian. Starting in the Old Hittite kingdom in the sixteenth century, Luwian seems responsible for most of the major changes in Hittite (most recently Rieken 2006). In the thirteenth century the impact is such that there must have been widespread bilingualism in higher circles which may be mirroring a society in which Luwian was the vernacular and Hittite in the end not much more than the "official" government medium (van den Hout 2007). However, as Trevor Bryce puts it, "the retention of this language would have helped reinforce the sense of dynasty, of unbroken family continuity through a succession of generations. [Hittite] was to remain the language of royalty throughout the period of the Hittite kingdom. This need not indicate continuing political supremacy by a particular group. Rather it reflects the retention of an important dynastic tradition."[5] So while in the end we cannot say much of anything about Hittite society at large, we can say that at least the Hittite ruling class was very interested in the past and used it as an important political tool.

Writing, Writings, and their Organization in Hittite Society

Writing came relatively late to the Hittites. Although they lived for over 200 years in close proximity with the Assyrian merchants who left behind over 20,000 cuneiform records, and although they were certainly confronted with northern Syrian writing from the late eighteenth century onwards, they seem to have felt

little or no need for writing for internal purposes until about 1550. Something of a chancellery seems to have emerged around 1500 and began to form collections and to hold on to certain records. It was around that time that King Telipinu concluded the first preserved Hittite international treaty (the *Treaty with Isputahsu*, his royal counterpart of Kizzuwatna, classical Cilicia toward the southeast), overhauled the country's tax and administrative system, and started recording land tenure grants. More importantly, there exists evidence to suggest that he was aware of the power of writing as a tool to exert influence without being there himself to enforce it, be it spatially to govern an extensive kingdom or chronologically to leave a political legacy that would endure after his death. He put things in writing so that generations to come could still enjoy his wisdom:

> Further, whoever becomes king and seeks evil for (his) brother (and) sister, you (shall be) his family council and you must tell him forthright: "Look at this record of bloodshed on the tablet: 'In the past bloodshed had become frequent in Hattusa and the gods took revenge on the royal family'." (*KBo* 3.1+ [*CTH* 19] ii 46–49, ed. Hoffmann 1984: 34–35)

With "this record of bloodshed" Telipinu is most probably referring to his own text in which he described at length the chain of bloody intrigues that characterized most of his predecessors' reigns.[6] They were one of the main reasons for his promulgation of new rules that were supposed to put the kingdom on a new footing. With this Telipinu shows his capability to think truly historically: he looks ahead and thinks of how future generations will think about his present as the past. He saw the power of writing and began to use it more systematically and on a wider scale. As soon as written administration started to develop, the necessary appraisal of its holdings prompted it to recycle most of the clay records but also to make deliberate choices to store documents for the future. In the end this process culminated in the corpus we now have. It is the total body of texts left behind when around 1200 the Hittite ruling class gave up the capital and headed for an as yet unknown destination.

This corpus of Hittite texts shows a clear dichotomy of long-term documents that were regularly copied and kept sometimes for several centuries, and short-term documents of which we have as a rule single and late (thirteenth-century) copies only.[7] The latter have been preserved only because the elite abandoned Hattusa and left them behind (see table 9.2).

This corpus of texts is preserved in close to 30,000 clay tablets and (mostly) fragments of tablets. These records were those of the ruling branch of the Hittite state and accessible to them only. Cuneiform literacy, albeit mostly passive, may have been widespread within this group itself, but is not likely to have extended much beyond it.

Apart from some minor locations, practically all texts in the capital Hattusa were kept in three major places of primary tablet storage: the Storerooms surrounding Temple 1 (StT1), the House on the Slope (*Haus am Hang* [HaH]), and a building

Table 9.2

Short-term texts:*
- letters (*CTH* 151–210)
- storeroom inventories and tax administration (*CTH* 231–250)
- tablet inventories (*CTH* 276–282)
- tablet labels (*CTH* 283)
- court depositions (*CTH* 293–297)
- cult inventories (*CTH* 501–530)
- oracle practice (*CTH* 561–582)
- vows (*CTH* 583–590)

Long-term texts:
- historiography, treaties, edicts (*CTH* 1–147, 211–216)
- charters (*CTH* 221–225)
- instructions and loyalty oaths (*CTH* 251–275)
- laws (*CTH* 291–292)
- mythology (Anatolian) (*CTH* 321–338)
- hymns and prayers (*CTH* 371–389)
- festival scenarios (*CTH* 591–721)
- Hattian, Palaic, and Luwian compositions (*CTH* 725–773)
- rituals (*CTH* 390–500)
  - non-Anatolian imported writings:
  - omina (*CTH* 531–560)
  - Sumerian, Akkadian and Hurrian compositions (*CTH* 310–316, 774–819)
  - non-Anatolian myths and epics (*CTH* 341–370)
  - hippological texts (*CTH* 284–287)
  - lexical lists (*CTH* 299–309)

Note: *The *CTH* numbers refer to the *Catalogue des textes hittites*, a standard listing of Hittite compositions by genre by Emmanuel Laroche = Laroche 1971 with supplements in Laroche 1972 and 1975. This work has now been replaced by the online *Konkordanz der hethitischen Keilschrifttafeln* (I–LX) by Silvin Košak on the website *Hethitologie Portal Mainz* at http://www.hethport.uni-wuerzburg.de/HPM/hethportlinks.html. [Accessed July 2013.]

atop the acropolis Büyükkale (Bldg. A). This last location stands out for the high percentage of long-term records ranging from circa 1550 to about 1200 with the older records clearly dominating. The StT1 and especially the HaH, on the other hand, contain mostly late to very late texts and overwhelmingly the more ephemeral short-term records. Bldg. A can therefore be characterized as a record center with documents that were considered important enough to hold on to, although they were no longer administratively "active." If needed they could be "ordered" as a kind of interlibrary loan by the StT1 or the HaH. Such needs could be a new treaty to be drawn up with a partner with whom relations had already been established in the past, or a change in the liturgy of a festival that required a new version or the composition of a new prayer ordered by the king.[8] In these cases old compositions could be used to compile a new one without having to start

from scratch. Or an old tablet could be ordered as an historical source. When his father Suppiluliuma I finally decided to send one of his sons to marry the recently widowed queen of Egypt, he marked the occasion with the public reading of a century-old treaty with that same country. It has been convincingly argued that Mursili II must have used tablets to write the biography of his father (the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*) and his own *Ten-Year* and *Extensive Annals* (Cancik 1976: 55–56). In the same category belongs the use of the "two old tablets" Mursili adduced to prove his point in the case of the epidemic. A picture thus emerges of a lively and effective administration with at least three distinct branches with partly different responsibilities.

Hittite Historiography and Its Audience

For most of the above texts the function or *Sitz im Leben* is relatively clear. The majority of short-term texts fall under an administrative heading and has a descriptive function, while correspondence was kept as long as its topics were considered relevant to the current administration. Long-term compositions, on the other hand, seem mostly prescriptive in the sense that they dictate behavior in the broadest sense of the word as in the case of treaties, edicts, instructions, laws, and scenarios for cultic celebrations and rituals (including the Anatolian myths that were an integral part of them). But they were also "prescriptive" (and therefore kept and stored) in the sense that they could be used as sources or models after which new documents could be drawn up or compiled. It has been claimed recently, however – and probably rightly so – that many of the rituals over time may have lost much of their practical and prescriptive value and increasingly became an object of what one might call academic or scholarly interest (Christiansen 2006: 30). This is likely to be true as well for those genres that are of foreign origin (Hurrian, Akkadian, and Sumerian). In my opinion it is here that one can speak of library-like holdings in the Hittite tablet collections, in the sense that these compositions were deliberately collected.

But how do we account for the annals of Hittite kings, in particular historical works like those of Mursili II? What was their purpose? For what audience were they intended? There is little evidence for their having been read out loud, let alone at regular occasions, and the lack of a very conspicuous propagandistic agenda with no obvious addressee, makes these questions difficult to answer. Propaganda hinges on oral or written dissemination. Clear proof of written dissemination is available for the oldest and latest periods but not in between. In his eponymous text of the middle of the eighteenth century King Anitta tells how he displayed the text of his *res gestae* on or near one of the city gates of Kanes/Nesa: "These words [I displayed? *vel sim.*] on a tablet on/at my gate" (*KBo* 3.22:33 w. dupl. *KUB* 36.98a obv. 4; ed. Neu 1974: 12–13, trans. Hoffner 1997). Hattusili I, for instance, had his *Annals* carved on or near a statue of himself and had it erected in the temple of the Sungoddess of Arinna. In the text he says: "and I made this gold statue of myself" (*KBo* 10.2 iii 21; ed. de Martino 2003: 68–69, trans. Beckman 2006: 221). The near-deictic pronoun "this"

implies that the *Annals* were inscribed on the statue itself or in its immediate proximity. Old Hittite compositions like those of Hattusili I can be called annalistic in that they list in chronological order military campaigns and related royal pursuits. They are very much "open" compositions in that one could add or subtract episodes at will without harming the consistency of the text. The syntax is simple with mostly parataxis. The public display and the exclusive focus on the "I" of the royal person make their intentions abundantly clear. Hattusili I, for instance, likens himself repeatedly to a lion:

> I went to the town of [Hassuwa]. The men of Hassuwa faced me in battle and [as alli]es alongside of them were the troops [of Aleppo]. They came to me in ba[ttle] and I fou[ght] them. In a matter of days I cross[ed] the Purana River and like a lion I crushed the country of Hassuwa wi[th] (my) feet, and [wh]en I attacked it, I heaped [dus]t on [it]. I capture[d a]ll its goods and filled Hattusa (with them). (*KBo* 10.2 ii 12–23; ed. de Martino 2003: 50–55, trans. Beckman 2006: 221)

In another passage, Hattusili proudly claims to have outdone even the legendary Sargon of Akkad, because not only did he cross the Euphrates but on top of that he destroyed some towns that Sargon had not:

> Nobody had [yet crossed] the Mala River (i.e., Euphrates), but I, the Great King, t[*abarna*, crossed it on foot], and (my) army crossed it on foot [following me]. Sarg[on had crosse]d (it). He had fou[ght] the troops of Hahha, but [he had] not done anything to [Hahh]a, [he had not] burned i[t] down [with fire], he had [shown no smoke] to the Stormgod of Heaven. I, the Great King, *tabarna*, did destroy Hassuwa and Hahha, with fire [I burned them do]wn and smoke I showed to the [Stormgod of] Heav[en]. (*KBo* 10.2 iii 29–40; ed. de Martino 2003: 72–76, trans. Beckman 2006: 221)[9]

Hattusili also liked to pose as the liberator of the oppressed:

> I, the Great King, *tabarna*, took the slave women's hands from the mill, I took the slaves' hands from the sickle. I freed them from taxes and corvée and took off their shackles. (*KBo* 10.2 iii 15–19; ed. de Martino 2003, 68 f., trans. Beckman 2006: 221)

Quite different, however, is the tone in the works of Mursili II. In his groundbreaking comparative study of Hittite and Old Testament historiography, Hubert Cancik has drawn attention to the literary character of the *Ten-Year Annals*, the *Extensive Annals*, and the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*. He describes them as much more "closed" literary works from which little could be omitted or to which little could be added without disturbing the balance and coherence of the composition as a whole. With a prologue and an epilogue these works display a unity that suggests a single author. The narrative is placed in a larger historical perspective, and while (in marked contrast to Mesopotamian practice) it pays scant if any attention to battle scenes, to hunting as the sport of kings, or to grand building enterprises (Riemschneider 1962: 110–11; Hoffner 1980: 326–27), it focuses all the more on deliberations and

movements leading up to military confrontations and on their aftermath. The author refers forward and backward, and separate story lines are sometimes interwoven in one narrative. There are geographical digressions and discussions of strategy, diplomacy, negotiations, and so forth. Striking is the attention devoted to deliberations that do not result in any actions. In the end, Cancik concludes that the works of Mursili are a first step towards political historiography. Here is an example from the Deeds of Suppiluliuma:

> While my father was down in the land of Karkamis, he sent (his generals) Lupakki and Tarhuntazalma off to the land of Amka. Thereupon they attacked Amka and brought back to my father prisoners of war, cattle and sheep. Now, when the people of Egypt heard of the attack on Amka, they became afraid. Since their lord Nipkhururiya[10] had recently died, the queen of Egypt who was the *dahamunzu* (= Egyptian term meaning "royal consort"), sent an envoy to my father and she wrote to him as follows: "My husband has died and I have no son. They say you have many sons. If you give me one son of yours, I want him to become my husband. I don't want to pick a subject of mine and make him my husband. I am … afraid!" When my father heard this, he summoned his grandees to discuss the matter (saying): "Such a thing has never happened to me before!" Thereupon my father sent Hattusazidi, his chamberlain, to Egypt (saying): "Go and bring me back a true report: perhaps they are setting a trap for me, perhaps they do have a son of their lord. So bring me back a true report!"
>
> (Meanwhile,) until Hattusazidi returned from Egypt, my father subsequently conquered the city of Karkamis. He besieged it for seven days and on the eighth day engaged it in battle for one day. [He took] it in a terrifying battle on the eighth day in [one] day. When he had conque[red] the city, because [my father was] a god-fearing man, he did not allow anybody cl[ose] to the upper city of [Kubaba and] the Protective Deity and he didn't ap[proach] any [of the temples]. On the contrary, he prostrated himself and gave […]. The lower City, however, he captured including (its) inhabi[tants], silver, gold, and bronze objects and carried it off to Hattusa. […] Then he [chose(?)] his son Sarrikusuh, gave him the land and city of Karkamis to govern and made him a king on his own.
>
> When he had set things straight at Karkamis, he returned to Hatti-Land and spent the winter in Hatti-Land.
>
> Now when it became spring, Hattusazidi [returned] from Egypt and, as envoy of Egypt, lord Hani came with him. When my father had sent Hattusazidi to Egypt and since he had instructed him as follows: "Perhaps they do have a son of their lord and are setting a trap for me and aren't (really) asking me for a son of mine for kingship," the queen of Egypt wrote back to my father in a letter as follows: "Why do you speak in that way: "They are setting a trap for me!"? If I had had a son, would I have written about my personal and my country's humiliation to another country? You have not believed me and you have spoken to me in such a way! He who was my husband, died, I do not have a son, I do not want to pick a subject of mine and make him my husband. To no other country have I written, to you have I written. They say you have many sons, so give me one son of yours and he will be my husband and king in Egypt!" Since my father was a compassionate man, he granted the woman's request and took care of the matter of the son. (*KBo* 5.6 iii 1–iv 15; ed. Güterbock 1956: 94–97)

Deposition vs. Dissemination

As mentioned earlier, the question of who the audience of Mursili's historiographic oeuvre was, is not easy to answer. Mursili concludes his *Ten-Year Annals* as follows:

> Since I sat down on my father's throne, I have already been king for ten years and single-handedly defeated these (i.e., aforementioned) enemy countries in (those) ten years but the enemy countries that the princes and commanders defeated are not included. What the Sungoddess of Arinna further has in store for me, that I will record and deposit (before the deity) (*KBo* 3.4 iv 44–48; ed. Götze 1933: 136–37).[11]

The last sentence seems a reference to his so-called *Extensive Annals* where he describes his first ten years again, including the contributions of the "princes and commanders," and then continues for the remainder of his reign. The fact that he explicitly says not to have included what his staff did already implies an acknowledgment of their share. The last sentence attests to his intention to display his account in the temple.

The deposition of important documents in temples is in itself not surprising. It is well attested for treaties and generally for documents that required an oath before the gods to come into effect. Divine wrath usually being the only sanction for breaking an oath, this is an entirely appropriate place for such texts to be kept, even if they never directly address the deity or deities (Korosec 1931: 92–100). In many cases these tablets will have been the fair or official copies that often were made of metal. The use of metal tablets is documented already around 1400. Before that, the Old Hittite charters or *Landschenkungsurkunden* frequently contain the formula "The words of the *tabarna*, Great King, are of iron and must not be violated!" (Riemschneider 1958: 334–35). However, none of the numerous charters preserved are of metal and their editor Kaspar Riemschneider was correct in pointing out that it is the "words," not the tablet itself that are said to be of iron, and the phrase is largely to be understood as a metaphor. It is conceivable, though, that the formula already foreshadows the later use of actual metal tablets and may have been the inspiration for that use. There is textual evidence for gold, silver, bronze, and iron tablets (Siegelóva 1993: 117a), and one bronze exemplar of a treaty of Tudhaliya IV with his vassal Kuruntiya of the province of Tarhuntassa in the south has actually survived the ages (ed. Otten 1988). It was one of a total of seven copies, and at the very end the text lists the places where all seven copies were deposited:

> These tablets are made in seven copies and they are sealed with the seal of the Sun Goddess of Arinna and with the seal of the Storm God of Hatti. One tablet is deposited before the Sun Goddess of Arinna, one tablet before the Storm God of Hatti, one tablet before (the deity) Lelwani, one tablet before (the goddess) Hebat of Kizzuwatna,

> one tablet before the Storm God of Lightning, one tablet in the palace before
> (the deity) Zithariya, while Kuruntiya, king of Tarhuntassa, keeps one tablet in his
> residence. (*Bo* 86/299 iv 44–51; ed. Otten 1988, 28–29)

The temples in which these copies were deposited, were not archives. Such bronze
copies were not meant to be kept in archives, they were more like "display" copies,
although the term "display" may give a false impression. The words "before" the
deity suggest a deposition in the cella where the deity's main statue was, but that is
unlikely to have been a space of general public access; rather, everything suggests
that only the king and priestly personnel were allowed in there.

However that may have been, given the judicial nature of these texts and the
oath that was directly associated with them, the deposition "before the deity" was
wholly appropriate, but for a composition like Mursili's *Annals* it is at first some-
what unexpected. The fact that one of the colophons of the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma*
mentions that it has "not yet been made into a bronze tablet" suggests that it, too,
was once supposed to be laid down in a temple.[12] Although these works neither
contain nor require an oath, they can be taken as the king's accounting for the
deeds he performed as representative of the gods on earth. It has been claimed
therefore that the gods were the primary audience of the *Annals*, offering testi-
mony to their support (Hoffner 1980: 326; Roszkowska-Mutschler 2002). At the
same time – but less importantly – they are assumed to have fulfilled a propagan-
distic function within court circles and to the outside world. The latter, so the
theory goes, would explain the fact that annals like those of Hattusili I also existed
in an Akkadian version. Cancik, on the other hand, sees only the ruling class and
those in their service as the intended audience (so too del Monte 1993: 14; Polvani
2005). In this context he points at the usual opening of such historical works with
umma ᵈUTU-*ŠI-MA* NN "Thus His Majesty, NN," otherwise typical of royal edicts
and proclamations. He further adduces two passages in Mursili's *Annals* that show
an addressee. One paragraph of Mursili's 13th year starts as follows:[13]

> Now see (2nd sing. imperative) how the mighty Stormgod, my lord, runs before me.
> He does not expose me to evil but has exposed me to good. (*KBo* 5.8 i 12–14; ed.
> Götze 1933: 148–49)

Whereas the hearer/reader is addressed here in the second person singular, another
example has a third person singular and hints at public readings:

> The city of Ura which is the most advanced post [in the land of] Azzi is located on an
> inaccessible place and whoever hears these tablets and … , let him send (someone) out
> and check how the city of Ura was [b]uilt! (*KUB* 14.17 iii 21–24 w. dupl. *KUB* 26.79
> i 15–18; ed. Götze 1933: 98–99)[14]

Although Cancik's identification of these two passages helps to make a case for oral
dissemination, he does not seem to comment on the function of a deposition

before the deity. Harry Hoffner (1980: 325) suggests that such second person pronouns are not applied consistently enough to make a compelling case for regular oral dissemination. Amir Gilan recently proposed to combine the two views with an essential modification of the first one. The *Annals*, he claims, do not address a deity but can be regarded as testimony to the power of the gods and the kings who enjoyed their support.[15] In this view the deposition of the text in a temple remains understandable and appropriate. It is like (and perhaps even was) the fulfilling of a vow just as we can observe it happening later in the reign of his son Hattusili III who says in his *Apology*:

> Mine was the recognition of the goddess Istar, My Lady, herself. Whichever enemy was in the Hittite lands, I chased him right out of the Hittite lands. But I will write a separate account (lit. tablet) about what enemy countries I conquered when I was young, and I will deposit it before the deity. (*KUB* 1.1 i 70–74; ed. Otten 1981: 8–9)

Gilan (2005: 368) also observes that such metal tablets, statues, and publicly displayed inscriptions were meant for "eternity." The words of the individual whose days in Hittite eyes were counted, gain an endurance that far exceeds his earthly life. Gilan thus adds future generations to the addressees of historical works like those of Mursili.

One wonders, however, if public readings continued for very long after a monarch's death. After all, now it was the next king's turn. And again, there is the question of accessibility if the bronze tablets were indeed kept in a temple's cella. It may be better to keep the question of dissemination and the deposition of a metal copy "before the deity" separate: clay copies were much easier to handle for (public) reading, and the bronze copy had its function as the expression of a king's pious account to the gods. If it indeed represented the fulfillment of a vow, such a document comes close to an oath, and its reproduction in metal is fully in line with that of treaties and similar records. The Hittites' use of metal copies seems at least partly comparable to the bronze tablets the Romans of the Republic and Empire set up, even if the latter were probably more ostentatious: "Engraving … on bronze may have made an outward and visible sign of the oath and the gods who were guarantors of the oath" (Williamson 1987: 176).

Hittite Historiography: A Case of Arrested Development?

But why then do Mursili's *Annals* and the *Deeds of Suppiluliuma* strike us as so modest and bland from the point of view of propaganda? Sure, he defeats his enemies, but he does not stress his valiant role in battle, he gives his generals credit where credit is due, and he regularly shows his merciful side towards settlements and people who ask for his forgiveness. The style of both works has even been characterized as "objective" and "journalistic" (del Monte 1993: 12, 14).

Comparing the Old Hittite historical works of Hattusili I and Telipinu with the oeuvre of Mursili II, one might be tempted to see a development. The few fragments of the *Annals of Tudhaliya I* of the end of the fifteenth century are, unfortunately, hard to judge: there is no evidence of public display and in its preserved parts the text seems to miss the rhetorical flourishes of his Old Hittite predecessors. As such it might already foreshadow the later style of Mursili II.

In this view, Hittite historiography would have evolved from its beginnings that were influenced by Mesopotamia and obviously propagandistic, into the more subtle and much less overtly biased genre of Mursili's *Deeds of Suppiluliuma* and annalistic works. If so, one might have expected the level of sophistication to have deepened or at least to have remained stable. Yet the opposite seems true. While no such compositions are known from the reigns of his immediate successors Muwatalli II and Mursili III/Urhitessub, grander compositions are available again under Hattusili III. Some fragments possibly come from his "*Annals*" (Gurney 1997). Other historiographic fragments ascribed to him unabashedly promote his still young son and future successor, Tudhaliya IV (Riemschneider 1962). The *Apology*, certainly, is by no means historiography for its own sake, as one might see it in Mursili's *Annals*: although it perhaps cannot be denied certain literary qualities, it is a highly biased dedicatory inscription that is anything but objective or journalistic. It seeks to legitimize Hattusili's coup that brought him to power.

After this, Hittite historiography seems to return to the days of Hattusili I, but with two differences: now, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the public inscriptions themselves are preserved, and they are no longer in Hittite and cuneiform but in Luwian and its "hieroglyphic" script (Bolatti Guzzo and Marazzi 2004). In this period, as mentioned earlier, Luwian seems to have taken over as the vernacular, while Hittite was the official language of the state and its ruling elite. With this language and script the ruling class was addressing a larger audience. Not that we can suppose that the population at large was capable of reading the script but it seems likely indeed that they must have recognized this script as their own, with many signs depicting things from everyday life and with direct links to royal iconography. The oldest known hieroglyphic Luwian inscription on stone dates to the reign of Muwatalli II just after 1300 and is a classic building inscription by his brother Talmisarruma. The first major hieroglyphic inscription with a historical narrative can be attributed to Hattusili III's successor Tudhaliya IV,[16] but the two most extensive texts stem from the reign of the latter's second son and last known Hittite king Suppiluliyuma II. All three are linked to architectural structures, and the so-called *Südburg* monument carries a classic building inscription: "When …, in that year I built this …"

Compositions in cuneiform Hittite comparable to Mursili's historiographical works have not been identified for this late period, and if we may take the archaeological record as representative of what was there and what was not there, Hittite kings after him seem no longer to have been interested in them. They still felt the need to ground decisions in the past, as Hattusili's *Apology* amply shows, and treaties still started with elaborate historical preambles but the "objective" or "journalistic" approach was apparently no longer fashionable. If ever there was a development, Hittite historical narrative reached its peak under Mursili II and quickly reverted to

its old ways after him. Seen this way, the works attributed to him may also be a testimony to a single individual of uncommon abilities who had no equals either before or after him in the Hittite kingdom and empire.[17]

Final Remarks

Whatever one thinks of Mursili's place in Hittite literature, the fact remains that over the course of their history the Hittite kings revealed an interest in history that was not restricted to one individual but was a defining characteristic of their collective rule from the earliest compositions of Hattusili I in the seventeenth century all the way to the moment the last king decided around 1200 to give up Hattusa as his residence. The most tangible evidence of such need to remember the past are the tablet collections where records were sometimes kept for at least three centuries and the distribution of records in various locations reveals historical thinking as an organizational principle.

   As observed by Lionel Casson in his book *Libraries in the Ancient World*, ancient text collections are often inextricably linked to the name of an individual: we all know the library of Assurbanipal in Niniveh, the library of the Ptolemies at Alexandria, or that of Celsus at Ephesus. The Hittite tablet collections are anonymous: they are not a single ruler's pride, not even a cause of pride *tout court*, it seems, unless one wants to detect a hidden sense of boasting in Mursili's simple words "Two old tablets I found."

Abbreviations

Bo   siglum for Boghazköy excavation numbers
CTH   E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris 1971)
KBo   *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi* (Berlin 1916 ff.)
KUB   *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* (Berlin 1921–1990)
RA   *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (ed. D.O. Edzard). Multiple vols. Berlin.

Notes

1   All dates follow the so-called Middle Chronology and are BCE.
2   For an excellent overview of Hittite history, see Bryce 1998.
3   See van den Hout 1997; for a discussion of the topic of the Apology, see Cancik 1976: 41–46.
4   For Mesopotamian omen and oracle practice, see Maul 2003–2005.
5   Bryce 1998: 17–18. In spite of Bryce's caution, Hittite history actually may show a remarkably steady family continuity. It is not impossible that a single dynasty ruled the Hittite kingdom and empire all the way from Anitta in the 18th century down to the end around 1200.
6   So already Cancik 1976: 64–65.

7   With the exception of the *Landschenkungsurkunden* that date from the end of the 16th cent. to circa 1400.

8   See for the latter van den Hout 2008.

9   The Hittite word *tabarna* (also *labarna*) is an exclusively royal title, usually left untranslated.

10 Although no certainty is to be had here, this may have been the famous King Tutankhamun.

11 On the translation of the last line, see Cancik 1976: 116–17, and Gilan 2005: 365. The understanding that the deposition is meant to be in the temple "before the deity" is supported by a few parallel passages that instead of (*n–at*) *katta tehhi* ("(and it/them) I deposited") use the phrase *PANI* DINGIR *dai-* ("to put before the deity"; see Gilan 2005: 365).

12 See, however, the remark of del Monte 1993: 15 who warns that we do not know for what place this alleged tablet was intended and whether it happened in the days of Mursili II.

13 In Götze's counting this is the 19th year.

14 See also Cancik 1976: 54; Gilan 2005: 364. Another second person singular can be found in *KUB* 19.37 ii 31–32 (ed. Götze 1933: 170–71), but this whole passage (*KUB* 19.37 ii 20–34, ed. Götze 1933: 168–71), with a surprising third person singular for Mursili II himself, may have been lifted out of a treaty-like document and therefore have no bearing on the issue of dissemination discussed here.

15 Gilan 2005: 366. I do not think, however, that it is necessary to assume that Hattusili I's dedication of the statue with its inscription provided the model that later Hittite kings followed (thus Gilan, 367).

16 This is the Yalburt inscription, edited by Poetto 1993 and Hawkins 1995.

17 Cf. Güterbock 1983: 31: "One might also think that some kings did not care to write about their deeds, and that Mursili, whose personality speaks to us from his numerous texts, was more than others given to conscientious and detailed reporting about what happened and why."

References

Beckman, G. 2006. "Annals of Hattusili I." In Chavalas 2006: 219–22.

Bolatti Guzzo, N., and M. Marazzi. 2004. "Storiografia hittita e geroglifico anatolico: per una revisione di KBo 12.38." In D. Groddek and S. Rößle (eds.), *Sarnikzel. Hethitologische Studien zum Gedenken an Emil Orgetorix Forrer*, 155–85. Dresden.

Bryce, T. 1998. *The Kingdom of the Hittites*. Oxford.

Cancik, H. 1976. *Grundzüge der hethitischen und alttestamentlichen Geschichtsschreibung*. Wiesbaden.

Casson, L. 2001. *Libraries in the Ancient World*. New Haven, London.

Chavalas, M.W. (ed.). 2006. *The Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation*. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Christiansen, B. 2006. *Die Ritualtradition der Ambazzi. Eine philologische Bearbeitung und entstehungsgeschichtliche Analyse der Ritualtexte CTH 391, CTH 429 und CTH 463*. Wiesbaden.

del Monte, G. 1993. *L'annalistica ittita*. Brescia.

de Martino, S. 2003. *Annali e res gestae antico ittiti*. Pavia.

Gilan, A. 2001. "Kampfspiele in hethitischen Festritualen – eine Interpretation." In T. Richter, D. Prechel, and J. Klinger (eds.), *Kulturgeschichten. Altorientalische Studien für Volkert Haas zum 65. Geburtstag*, 113–24. Saarbrücken.

Gilan, A. 2005. "Die hethitischen 'Mannestaten' und ihre Adressaten". In A. Süel (ed.), *V. Uluslararası Hititoloji Kongresi Bildirileri/Acts of the Vth International Congress of Hittitology*, 359–69. Ankara.

Goedegebuure, P. 2006. "The Proclamation of Telipinu." In Chavalas 2006: 228–35.

Götze, A. 1933. *Die Annalen des Mursili*. Leipzig.

Gurney, O.R. 1997. "The Annals of Hattusilis III." *Anatolian Studies* 47: 127–39.

Güterbock, H.G. 1956. "The Deeds of Suppiluliuma as Told by His Son, Mursili II." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 10: 41–130.

Güterbock, H.G. 1983. "Hittite Historiography: A Survey." In H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (eds.), *History, Historiography and Interpretation. Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, 21–35. Jerusalem and Leiden.

Hallo, W.W., and K.L. Younger (eds.). 1997–2002. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vols. Leiden.

Hawkins, J.D. 1995. *The Hieroglyphic Inscription of the Sacred Pool Complex at Hattusa (Südburg)*. Wiesbaden.

Hoffmann, I. 1984. *Der Erlaß Telipinus*. Heidelberg.

Hoffner, H.A. 1980. "Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Hittites." *Orientalia* 49: 283–332.

Hoffner, H.A. 1997. "The Queen of Kanesh and the Tale of Zalpa"; "The Proclamation of Anitta." In Hallo and Younger 1997: I. 181–82; 182–84.

Korosec, V. 1931. *Hethitische Staatsverträge. Ein Beitrag zu ihrer juristischen Wertung*. Leipzig.

Laroche, E. 1949. "La bibliothèque de Hattusa." *Archiv Orientální* 17: 7–23.

Laroche, E. 1972. "Catalogue des textes hittites, Premier supplément." *Revue hittite et asianique* 32, 94–133.

Laroche, E. 1975. "Ouvrages reçus" (= reviews of *KUB* 44–46 and *KBo* 22). *Revue hittite et asianique* 33, 63–71.

Maul, S. 2003–2005. "Omina und Orakel. A. Mesopotamien." *RA* 10.1/2: 45–88.

Neu, E. 1974. *Der Anitta-Text*. Wiesbaden.

Otten, H. 1981. *Die Apologie Hattusilis III. Das Bild der Überlieferung*. Wiesbaden.

Otten, H. 1988. *Die Bronzetafel aus Boghazköy*. Ein Staatsvertrag Tuthalijas IV. Wiesbaden.

Poetto, M. 1993. *L'iscrizione luvio-geroglifico di Yalburt. Nuove acquisizioni relative alla geografia dell'Anatolia sud-occidentale*. Pavia.

Polvani, A.M. 2005. "Aspetti della narrativa degli Annali di Mursili II." In F. Pecchioli Daddi and M.C. Guidotti (eds.), *Narrare gli eventi*, 279–83. Rome.

Rieken, E. 2006. "Zum hethitisch-luwischen Sprachkontakt in historischer Zeit." *Altorientalische Forschungen* 33: 271–85.

Riemschneider, K.K. 1958. "Die hethitischen Landschenkungsurkunden." *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung* 6: 321–381.

Riemschneider, K.K. 1962. "Hethitische Fragmente historischen Inhalts aus der Zeit Hattusilis III." *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 16: 110–21.

Roszkowska-Mutschler, H. 2002. "Zu den Mannestaten der hethitischen Könige und ihrem Sitz im Leben." In P. Taracha (ed.), *Silva Anatolica: Anatolian Studies Presented to Maciej Popko on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, 289–300. Warsaw.

Siegelová, J. 1993. "Metalle und Metallurgie. A. II. In den heth. Texten." *RA* 8/1–2: 112–19.

van den Hout, T. 1997. "The Apology of Hattusili." In Hallo and Younger 1997: I. 199–204.

van den Hout, T. 2006. "Mursili II's 'First' Plague Prayer" and "Mursili II's 'Second' Plague Prayer." *In Chavalas* 2006: 259–66.

van den Hout, T. 2007. "Institutions, Vernaculars, Publics: The Case of Second Millennium Anatolia." In S. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*, 221–62. Chicago (revised version of 2006 with a postscript).

van den Hout, T. 2008. "A Classified Past: Classification of Knowledge in the Hittite Empire." In R.D. Biggs, J. Myers, and M. Roth (eds.), *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, 2005*, 211–219. Chicago.

Williamson, C. 1987. "Monuments of Bronze: Roman Legal Documents on Bronze Tablets." *Classical Antiquity* 6: 160–83.

10

Thinking and Writing about History in Teispid and Achaemenid Persia

ROBERT ROLLINGER

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the time between Cyrus the Great's accession to power around 550 BCE and the death of the last Achaemenid king Darius III in 330 (Briant 2002; Huyse 2005; Wiesehöfer 2005: 19–148; Brosius 2006: 1–78).[1] During this time two different dynasties held power: the Teispids (Cyrus the Great and Cambyses) and Achaemenids (Darius I through Darius III; Rollinger 1998; Henkelman 2011; Jacobs 2011). It is often assumed that with Cyrus's conquest of Babylon in 539 Mesopotamian history came to an end and a new "Persian" epoch began (e.g., Maul 1998, 2003). Yet this opinion causes difficulties because continuity and change appear side-by-side during this time (Jursa 2007; Rollinger 2011). Since the Persian Empire was a multiethnic and multicultural conglomerate (Schmitt 1992), it is hard to define what may be regarded as genuinely "Persian"; any ethnic interpretation of the extant data seems problematic and anachronistic. I will therefore not focus on finding a specific or genuine "Persian" concept of thinking and writing about the past but more generally on interpreting all relevant concepts that can be observed in our sources during Teispid and Achaemenid times.

Is There "History" or "Historiography"
in Teispid and Achaemenid Times?

I begin with a short note on the vexed question of when the phenomenon of recording and writing history evolved in antiquity. For a long time it was accepted as a fact that this process started only with the Greeks and not earlier than the fifth century (e.g., Näf 2010: 45–48). According to this view, with his *Histories* Herodotus introduced a new genre that he himself qualified as *historiē*, "inquiry" (Bichler and Rollinger 2011: 13–15). Yet, though it is true that the term "history" was created by the Greeks and soon applied to a new literary genre that was considered different from poetry and myth, the term, as we use it nowadays, received its intrinsic connotations not before the nineteenth century CE. The terms "history" and "historiography" are evidently artificial, used by recent historians to categorize texts that differ greatly among themselves – as is visible immediately when we compare Greek and Roman historical writing (Näf 2010; Raaflaub 2010; Feldherr and Hardy 2011). Unquestionably, the ancient Greeks invented a new form of dealing with the past – an investigative historical narrative – and such texts did indeed not exist in the ancient Near East (van de Mieroop 1999: 2–3). These historical narratives at least claim to tell the truth and to report without bias (Näf 2010: 47), although, equally without question, in classical antiquity historiography was never neutral (Mehl 2011: 26).

Even if ancient Near Eastern cultures did not use a term like *historiē*, they did deal broadly with the past, developed a form of historical consciousness (Cwik-Rosenbach 1990; van de Mieroop 2012), and frequently claimed in this context as well to tell the truth (Pongratz-Leisten 2002). It is thus hard to deny that the ancient Near East also had and produced its "history." The texts dealing with the past were as "intentional" as classical historiography was (Foxhall et al. 2010: 9–14). This past was given meaning by actors and agents. It could be invented and manipulated, and what was to be reported was subject to choice. All these texts, whether originating in the classical or "proto-historical period" (van de Mieroop 1999: 3), can be taken as "representations of the past" (Gehrke 2010) and must be evaluated critically by modern historians (van de Mieroop 1997; Harrison 2011). Mario Liverani's scathing characterization of modern approaches applies to both as well: "Once the naïve equation 'sources = facts' has been proven false and set aside, the hasty (and just as naïve) conclusion is that sources are not history, but just stories, and history does not exist" (2000: 332). From this perspective it is also revealing how "history" was defined at the end of antiquity by Isidore of Seville: "A history (*historia*) is a narration of deeds accomplished; through it what occurred in the past is sorted out" (*Etymologies* 1.41; trans. Barney et al. 2010: 67). Most ancient Near Eastern kings would not have disagreed with such a definition when referring to their royal inscriptions.[2]

This brief discussion takes us to the primary concern of this chapter. Can we use the term "historiography" for texts that were written many centuries before Herodotus? Certainly it is up to us to determine what we mean by "historiography" – a term that

was always used loosely and applied to many different kinds of texts, including those of preclassical Mesopotamia (van de Mieroop 1999; Lloyd 2011). Such an approach has its advantages, since an engagement with the past was a major concern of almost all developed cultures, including of course those of the ancient Near East. This engagement generated specific texts, and it is these texts with which we are dealing here.

But there is another, more difficult question: what exactly does "history" in ancient Persia mean? Can Teispid or Achaemenid attitudes towards history be distinguished, for instance, from Mesopotamian or Egyptian ones? And what texts can be assumed to be representative of such an attitude? We may address this vexed problem by modifying our question: what texts were produced by Teispid and Achaemenid rulers to deal with what we call history, and in what traditions do these texts stand? To tackle this problem, we start our investigation with those texts that are generally labeled royal inscriptions. But, as we will see, these are not the only texts that matter for our discussion.

History in the Time of the Teispids
Cyrus and Cambyses

The most famous historical document in this period is the so-called *Cyrus Cylinder* (K70–74), a text that qualifies as a royal inscription and was written in cuneiform script in the Babylonian language shortly after Cyrus's victory over the Babylonian king Nabonidus (Kuhrt 2007a; also Beaulieu 2007a; van Dongen 2011). Scholars agree that it is deeply rooted in Babylonian and Assyrian traditions and cannot be taken as an example of a "Persian" view of history. Still, we should not ignore that Cyrus, originating in an area where Persian and Elamite traditions had merged over centuries (Henkelman 2003b, 2011), used the format of a Mesopotamian royal inscription to express his view of the past in a Babylonian context. Only in his tripartite genealogy does he mention his Persian forefathers, thus hinting at a legitimizing tradition outside of Mesopotamia proper (see below and Rollinger 1998). Clearly, therefore, the new ruler consciously applied an already existing Babylonian medium to present himself as a legitimate Babylonian king in front of a Babylonian audience. This is an important observation because it acknowledges the multinational character of the new empire where many different historical traditions existed side-by-side. A new ruler portrayed himself according to local traditions, and we can be sure that in his homeland Fars he presented himself quite differently.

Yet some important aspects in this inscription transcend the prevalent Babylonian focus and reveal a new way of historical thinking. The inscription begins by characterizing Cyrus's predecessor Nabonidus *inter alia* as a "humble man" (line 2: *maṭû*) and describes his reign as an unjust and evil era:

> (5) An imitation of Esangil (main Marduk temple in Babylon) he made […] to Ur and the other cult-centres. (6) A cult order that was unsuitable […] he spoke daily, and, an evil thing, (7) he stopped the regular offerings […]. The worship of

Marduk, king of the gods, he removed from his mind. (8) He repeatedly did that which was bad for his city. Daily […] he destroyed all his [subjects] with an unending yoke. (9) In response to their lament the Enlil of the gods (i.e., Marduk) grew very angry […] (trans. here and below K70–72).

Nabonidus's reign, an era of distress and sadness, is clouded by the growing wrath of Marduk, Babylon's supreme god. Since kingship depends on divine favor, Marduk's anger has severe consequences. Eventually, he pities the suffering people of Babylon and installs a new king who introduces a new era of justice and prosperity.

(10) Marduk […], to all the places, whose dwelling-places were in ruins, (11) and to the inhabitants of Sumer and Akkad, who had become like corpses, he turned his mind, he became merciful. He searched through all the countries, examined (them), (12) he sought a just ruler to suit his heart, he took him by the hand: Cyrus, king of Anshan, he called, for dominion over the totality he named his name. (13) Gutium and all the Umman-manda he made subject to him. The black-headed people, whom he allowed his hands to overcome, (14) he protected in justice and righteousness. Marduk, the great lord, who cares for his people, looked with pleasure at his good deeds and his righteous heart.

The terms in which the search for a new king is described were familar to Babylonian ears. Already King Lugal-zage-si of Umma (ED IIIb, 3rd millennium) claimed to have been chosen by the supreme god of the country and, like Cyrus, to be a ruler over the world (*RIME* 1.14.20.1, lines II 3–11 = Steible and Behrens 1982: 317, Luzag. 1, lines 2, 3–11). Yet some slight differences between Cyrus's and Lugal-zage-si's inscriptions made it unmistakably clear to any Babylonian that something had changed. Although it was still a Babylonian god who had elected the new king Cyrus, his search was no longer confined to Babylonia proper (Sumer and Akkad) but to "all the countries," and it was outside of Babylonia, in Anshan (modern Fars), that he had found what he was looking for.[3] As the text goes on to emphasize, it is this "foreigner" who will become king of Babylon:

(15) He (Marduk) ordered him to go to Babylon, and let him take the road to Babylon. Like a friend and companion he went by his side. (16) His massive troops, whose number was immeasurable like the water of a river, marched with their arms at their side. (17) Without battle and fighting he let him enter his city Babylon. He saved Babylon from its oppression. Nabonidus, the king who did not honour him, he handed over to him. (18) All the inhabitants of Babylon, the whole of the land of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors knelt before him, kissed his feet, rejoiced at his kingship; their faces shone. (19) "The lord, who through his help has brought the dead to life, who in (a time of) disaster and oppression has benefited all" – thus they joyfully celebrated him, honoured his name.

Although we know from other texts (such as the *Nabonidus Chronicle*) that some heavy fighting took place at Opis before Cyrus's troops could enter Babylon peacefully

(Grayson 1975: 109, lines iii 12–15), the *Cyrus Cylinder* conceals these events in order to enhance the effects of Marduk's divine benevolence for Cyrus. At this point, when Cyrus has just become Babylonian king, the text again changes perspective, and Cyrus introduces himself with a sophisticated genealogy as the new king. It is this genealogy which, in a Babylonian context, reveals that the new king is not of indigenous origin:

> (20) I, Cyrus, king of the universe, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters, (21) son of Cambyses, great king, king of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, great king, king of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, great king, king of Anshan, (22) eternal seed of kingship, whose reign was loved by Bel and Nabu and whose kingship they wanted to please their hearts – when I had entered Babylon peacefully …

Although titles, formulae, and the genealogy as such are Mesopotamian features, the individual names and the reference to Anshan are decidedly not. The genealogy is a basic element of the king's self-representation. It not only focuses retrospectively on Cyrus's ancestors, but also looks to the future, when Cyrus introduces his son Cambyses and develops the idea of world dominion in terms once again familiar to Babylonian ears:

> (26) … Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced at my [good] deeds. (27) Me, Cyrus, the king, who worships him, and Cambyses, my very own son, as well as all my troops (28) he blessed mercifully. In well-being we [walk] happily before him. [At his] great [command] all the kings, who sit on thrones, (29) from all parts of the world, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, who dwell [in distant regions], all the kings of Amurru, who dwell in tents, (30) brought their heavy tribute to me and kissed my feet in Babylon.

With Marduk's assistance and the conquest of Babylon Cyrus has not only assumed rule over the world but also founded a new dynasty of kings ruling the world. Marduk's blessing of Cyrus and Cambyses is meaningful in this context. Their realm – the entire world from Upper Sea (the Mediterranean) to Lower Sea (the Persian Gulf) – is visualized according to Mesopotamian tradition (Yamada 2005). The recognition they receive from all kings of the civilized ("all the kings who sit on thrones") and uncivilized world ("all the kings of Amurru, who dwell in tents") is staged in Babylon. They act as Babylonian kings and world rulers, and this also requires an appropriate engagement in building activities (Schaudig 2010). This applies especially to the walls of Babylon – (38) "to strengthen the wall Imgur-Enlil, the great wall of Babylon […], I took action" – an obligation every Babylonian king had to endorse in a ritual act during the New Year festival. As we know from archival texts, Cyrus tried indeed to be faithful to this tradition (Rollinger 2013a).

But let us return to the specific view of history developed in the *Cyrus Cylinder*. Focus on the past is not confined to chastising the evil reign of the preceding ruler or emphasizing the age-old lineage of the new king originating from outside

Babylonia. It entails much more and has something to do with the country itself, as becomes evident in a broken passage at the end of the inscription: (43) "[… An inscription] with the name of Ashurbanipal, a king who preceded me […] I found." Just as his hated predecessor did (Schaudig 2003), Cyrus pays attention to the kings of the past. He respects them and takes care of their monuments, thus demonstrating a consciousness that makes him a member of the country's age-old history.[4] In addition, combining an inward and outward perspective, Cyrus draws on the history of Babylonia itself. Although obviously he did not compose the inscription himself, and there is little doubt that the text's authors were members of the Babylonian social elite, the inscription clearly was not composed without Cyrus's authorization. It therefore constitutes a seminal document for the king's self-representation in a foreign context. As the conceptualization of Cyrus as a world ruler, savior, and messiah in the Deutero-Isaiah section of the Biblical book of Isaiah shows (K82–84; Kratz 1991), this form of propaganda was not confined to Babylonia proper.

For our purpose two observations seem important. First, the text focuses primarily on matters of contemporary history. Second, these very recent events are represented in a dichotomized world-view. The bad rule of an evil predecessor is contrasted with the good rule of a new and just king. Although this is not a new concept, it is here elaborated and refined.[5] In another text, it is developed even further: the so-called *Verse Account* is part of Babylonian historical literature and a masterpiece of royal propaganda and political agitation (K75–80; Schaudig 2001: 563–78). With the *Cyrus Cylinder* it shares not only the tendency to draw contemporary history in black and white but also a rather sketchy understanding of the more distant past. Whereas Ashurbanipal appears as a prominent royal predecessor of the new king in the *Cyrus Cylinder*, Nebuchadnezzar plays this part in the *Verse Account* (VI 10). But the latter text lacks the elaborate genealogy of the new king, a characteristic feature of Cyrus's presentation in the *Cylinder* – perhaps because the *Verse Account*'s historical setting is entirely Babylonian and Babylonian kings did not elaborate long genealogies in their inscriptions (da Riva 2008: 2–18). Interestingly, the *Verse Account* also touches upon the issue of historical veracity. Kings are represented here as lying, manipulating documents, and attributing deeds to themselves they have never accomplished. The text even characterizes an illiterate king as unworthy of being acknowledged as a wise man:

> (2) [… countries] (3) which he (Nabonidus) had not conquered, he wrote on (it) [… about] (4) Cyrus, king of the universe, who ru[les …] (5) [whose yoke] the king of every land is pulling, (6) (but) he (Nabonidus) wrote on his stel[ae:] "At my feet [I made him prostrate himself.] (7) His countries I conquered; his possessions I took to [my country."] (8) He would stand in the assembly, exalt him[self]: (9) "I am wise; I am knowledgeable; I have seen hidden [things]. (10) Cuneiform I do not know, (but) I have seen sec[rets.] (11) Revelations have been made to me by Il-Śēr (the moon god), everything he has made [known to me.] (12) (As for the series) *Uskār Anu Enlil*, which Adapa compiled – (13) I surpass it in all wisdom." (V 2–13, K77–78, modified according to Schaudig 2001: 576).

According to this text, Nabonidus pretended to have been successful where he in fact was not and to have qualities which he indeed was lacking. To understand the "secret things" was one of the major goals the Assyrian kings were eager to achieve with the assistance of their experts (Pongratz-Leisten 1999; Lenzi 2008; Frahm 2011). Most ancient Near Eastern kings did not reveal whether they were able to read (and write). Among the few exceptions are, famously, Shulgi and Ashurbanipal. Apparently, Nabonidus too claimed to have this expertise (Schaudig 2002; Livingstone 2007; Frahm 2011). But our text, implying an engagement with Nabonidus's inscriptions presenting this claim, seems to trivialize it by poking fun at the king's devotion to the moon-god and calling the astrological series Nabonidus said he knew so well "Lunar crescent (*uskāru*) of Anu and Enlil" instead of correctly "When Anu and Enlil" (*iškar Enūma Anu Enlil*; Frahm 2011: 525). Moreover, this critique suggests, at least indirectly, that "knowing cuneiform" is a major requirement of a king claiming to be wise and knowledgeable. Whether Cyrus himself was able to meet this demand is not disclosed here.

The importance of genealogy and local (Babylonian and Assyrian) tradition abounds not only in the *Cyrus Cylinder*, but also in another document that draws our perspective from historical texts to those of ritual and cult: a Babylonian letter dating to the third year of King Cambyses (529–522). It confirms the Teispids' efforts to respect the guidelines drawn by Babylonian tradition:

> Nabû-mukīn-apli, the "bishop" of Eanna … said to (eleven named men), the Babylonians and Urukeans, the temple assembly of Eanna, as follows: "A messenger of the king and the governor of Babylon (*šākin ṭēm bābili*) [has come who] has said as follows: 'Show me any inscribed stelae (*a-su-mit-tu₄*^{meš}) of former kings which are being kept in Eanna.' Show any old inscribed stelae that you know of to the messenger of the king. Show everything that you remember and of which you know to the messenger of the king." (*BM* 113249 [1919-6-14, 1, dated 29.6.3 Camb], according to Jursa 2007: 78)

Obviously, the king, in an investigative attitude, charged some distinguished persons with finding out what historical documents were kept in the temples of the country. Although one cannot exclude the possibility of a general interest in history itself, one suspects that cultic and religious matters were the primary impulse for the king's curiosity about historical documents. In any case, evidence from the succeeding Achaemenid period illuminates the interrelation between concern for cult and historical perspective.

Dealing with History during Achaemenid Times

Royal ancestor cult, genealogy, and historical consciousness

I begin with two documents originating in the reign of the first Achaemenid king, Darius I (521–486). A recently published text from the Persepolis Fortification Archive, written in Elamite in Darius's 23rd year (499/8), attests the existence of

tombs of the royal family (including ancestors like Darius's father Hystaspes) at Persepolis that were apparently maintained by "officials" of the royal bureaucracy (Henkelman 2003a). The text mentions provisions of "60 BAR [approx. 600 liters] of grain (to) the men who are keepers of the tomb (*šumar*) of Hystaspes (at) Persepolis," and it specifies these provisions as "rations for their servants. Second, third and fourth months, during a total of 3 months in the 23rd year. 2 [persons] each 30l(iters); 7 [persons] each 20l; total: 9 workmen" (*PF-NN* 1700; K574). At first glance, the text simply attests the presence of officials or servants responsible for keeping the tomb and receiving rations from the central office in Persepolis. That these "servants" also performed cult activities and the delivery was due to these obligations is highly probable, given the seminal importance the royal genealogy had at that time. If indeed some kind of ancestor cult was involved it may have included offerings at the tomb of Darius's father Hystaspes, and some of the "rations" may initially have been part of these offerings. In any case, this kind of (cult) observance was not restricted to Darius's direct lineage. Further documents in the Persepolis Archives hint at another center of cult activities located at Narezzash (probably Niriz in southeastern Fars: Henkelman 2008a). One document, focusing on the years 19 and 20 of Darius I (503/2 and 502/1), lists supplies for the *šumar* (tomb) of Cambyses and (the woman) Upandush (probably Phaidyme, daughter of Otanes and wife of Bardiya), and it specifies: "The *šumar* that (are) of Cambyses and Upandush, for those each monthly 1 head of small cattle" (*PF-NN* 2174; K574).

As comparative research has demonstrated, ancestor cult and genealogy are indicative of some kind of historical awareness and consciousness (e.g., van Seters 2011: 90–91; Thapar 2011: 563, 567). As we have already seen with the *Cyrus Cylinder*, genealogy and ancestors were important elements of legitimization attaching a ruler to a prestigious family and its past. Yet, not only the chronological but also the spatial dimensions matter, since this past is connected to the region of Parsa (modern Fars) where all Persian kings originated. Thus, a specific form of remembrance was practiced at the royal tombs involving members of very high echelons of the imperial society (Rollinger 2013b). Performance of the monthly funerary cult, when offerings were placed on an offering table (elamite, *bašur*), also had political significance in creating an identity attached to the empire and its founders. These rituals focused on the figure of the king as an individual oscillating between the divine and human worlds (Rollinger 2013b). Hence in Neo-Assyrian times the kings consumed the offerings originally presented to the gods at a *banšur*-table (Parpola 1993: no. 196, line 15). Moreover, as new evidence shows, cultic activities concerning royal predecessors were not restricted to tombs. *BM* 72747, an unpublished tablet from the Ebabbar-Archive in the Babylonian city of Sippar (Rollinger 2011), dating to the first year of Xerxes, mentions "offerings for the statue of Darius" (*sattuk ša ṣalam Darīʾamuš*) and thus attests for the first time offerings for the statue of a Persian king in a Babylonian temple. To some degree, this procedure followed the precedent established by King Nabonidus (Schaudig 2003) who had set up a prebendary cult for his own statue in Uruk. Even if the

statue was already introduced by Darius himself he established a kind of *lieu de mémoire* which was maintained during Xerxes' early reign and probably beyond.

Moreover, genealogy and ancestor cult seem to reflect an even broader dimension of "historicization" that had evolved already in Neo-Babylonian times and became popular among members of the urban upper class: the use of two-part filiations. Personal identification was provided not only by a patronymic but in addition by reference to an ancestor. These ancestors may be regarded as "family names" rooted in the very distant past (Jursa 2005: 7–8). Later, in Hellenistic times, genealogies would be elaborated further to include even four and five elements. This phenomenon may be interpreted as reflecting an increasing individual historical consciousness, mirrored by the kings' genealogies. These royal genealogies seem to become even more important in Achaemenid times. Before examining this issue more closely, we need to return to the royal inscriptions.

Some years ago, the topic of "Persian kings and history" received magisterial treatment by the late Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg. She recognized that the conception of history in Achaemenid times developed in three phases. The first is visible in the first four columns of the Bisitun inscription that reflect the classical view of history as a sequence of events. Column V of the same monument represents the beginning of a second phase, the transition to an intermediate period that is relevant for most of the inscriptions of Darius's successor Xerxes. After Xerxes the picture changes completely, indicating a timeless attitude towards history. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1999: 110) characterized this development as follows:

> This Iranian style of dealing with history has nothing to do with documenting the past: that is completely irrelevant. The royal concern is with the present and the future. This "timeless attitude" entirely agrees with the iconography of the Persepolis reliefs. Although the iconography looked for inspiration to the Assyrian reliefs (as well as to visual expressions of other near eastern traditions), a comparison between the subject material of Assyrian and Persian reliefs is revealing. Any specific activity is totally absent in Persepolis and elsewhere. No conquered cities, no royal victories, only activities of a ritual type, which by their nature are repetitive. History, i.e. events, is nowhere recorded but at Bisitun, which – along with the accompanying text – is the exception. It should be added that it is highly unlikely even that specific kings were portrayed. All kings on the reliefs look alike and, as has now been demonstrated, are not even distinguishable by individual crowns. The royal figures on the reliefs should not be regarded either as Darius or Xerxes, but merely as "the king." All historical references are lacking: the empire on the reliefs and in the cuneiform texts is timeless. This has important consequences for the use we make of Persian texts and images …

Although I am reluctant to qualify this phenomenon as "Iranian" in the sense of a "national" attitude, the general description is undoubtedly correct. A closer look at these texts even reveals four phases of development. Moreover, this development is part of a much larger scenario that encompasses a dialogue with almost two thousand years of Mesopotamian history and historical texts.

First phase: the monumental inscription (and rock relief) of King Darius I at Bisitun

Darius's rock relief and its inscriptions have a complex history that is partly still debated and not our primary concern here (Borger 1982). The relief depicts King Darius guided by the winged disk, probably representing Auramazda (discussion in Rollinger 2011), and his victory over the nine liar kings led by the false Bardiya (Smerdis), Gaumata by name (Schwinghammer 2011b). The relief and its inscriptions were not executed from scratch according to a single and original plan but reconceptualized and "improved" several times by adding new elements and data. For example, the figure of the Scythian ruler Skunkha was added only after the main scene had been finished. The inscriptions were designed in three different versions, two identical ones in Elamite and one each in Babylonian and Old Persian (von Voigtlander 1978; Schmitt 1991; Grillot-Susini et al. 1993). Parts of a second Babylonian version have been found in Babylon (von Voigtlander 1978: 63–66; Seidl 1999a, 1999b), and an Aramaic version has survived in the papyrus archives of Elephantine in Egypt (Greenfield and Porten 1982). The Bisitun inscription(s) are a most remarkable assembly of texts. Against a clearly political background, the whole monument, and especially the texts, have the purpose of presenting an official version of events of the most recent past, explaining Darius's ascent to power, and obscuring his usurpation (Rollinger 1998). Relating how the magnificent king defeated the nine liar kings within one year (Rollinger 2006a), the narrative is full of details (persons, places, dates, and accurate numbers) and gives the impression of a straightforward factual report focusing on political history. Precise dates and numbers are a special feature of this text (the Babylonian version stands out even more with its insistence on exactness: Schmitt 1980). Nor are dramatic elements lacking, emphasized particularly through the broad use of direct speech. Even so, the text is set in a clear ideological framework (see chapters by Jacobs, Kuhrt, Parpola, and Radner in Lanfranchi and Rollinger 2010) in which Darius is the only legitimate king.[6] He represents the correct world order and is protected by Auramazda and the conception of truth, whereas his opponents stand for lie and turmoil.

> (10) Darius the king proclaims: This is what was done by me after I became king: the son of Cyrus, by name Cambyses, of our family, he was king here; this Cambyses had a brother, by name Bardiya; he had the same mother, the same father as Cambyses; then Cambyses killed that Bardiya; when Cambyses killed Bardiya, the people did not know that Bardiya had been killed; then, Cambyses went to Egypt. When Cambyses had gone to Egypt, the people became disloyal; and the Lie grew among the people, both in Persia and Media and among the other peoples.

> (11) Darius the king proclaims: Then there was a man, a magus, Gaumata by name; he rebelled in Paishiyauvada. A mountain, by name Arakadri, from there – fourteen days of the month Viyakhna had gone [11 March 522], when he rebelled. He lied thus to the people: "I am Bardiya, son of Cyrus, brother of Cambyses". Then all the

people became rebellious against Cambyses; they went over to him, both Persia and Media, as well as the other peoples. He seized the kingship; nine days of the month Garmapada had gone [1 July 522], then he seized kingship. After that, Cambyses dies his own death. (K143)

Illegitimacy is described in terms of lying. This pattern is embedded in the stream of ancient Near Eastern traditions where it came to the fore already at the turn of the second millennium (Pongratz-Leisten 2002; Lämmerhirt 2010).[7] But it was never elaborated as systematically as Darius (and his scribes) did here. Although legitimacy corresponds to the idea of truth, the Achaemenids developed this conception only marginally (Wiesehöfer 2008: 196–97; also Kellens 2002). Thus it is not the pretension to tell the truth which becomes a "theological motif" (Liverani 2011: 48) but the conception of the lie which represents illegitimacy and turmoil. Legitimacy was once again underscored by genealogy – in this case of a special type, even in an ancient Near Eastern context (Henninger 1983). It stands out both because of its length (comprising no less than eight parts) and because three of the predecessors whom Darius presents as members of his family remain anonymous:

> (2) Darius the king proclaims: My father is Vishtaspa; Vishtaspa's father is Arshama; Arshama's father is Ariaramna (Greek Ariaramnes), Ariaramna's father is Cishpish (Teispes); Cishpish's father is Hakhaimanish (Achaemenes).
>
> (3) Darius the king proclaims: For this reason we are called Achaemenids. From long ago we are noble; from long ago we are royal.
>
> (4) Darius the king proclaims: Eight of our family were kings before; I am the ninth; nine kings are we in succession. (K141)

Darius is looking into the past along an extended and exceptional royal lineage the members of which are identified only partly. Although in the final paragraph all his ancestors are labelled "kings," the five members he adduces by name do not even bear a royal title. Obviously, this ancestry is part of a major effort at historical construction; as such it reveals the necessity of legitimization through the past even in a text that is mainly concerned with contemporary history.

Second phase: column V of the Bisitun-Inscription

It is generally accepted that Column V, containing §§71–76, represents a later addition to the Bisitun monument (Borger 1982; Huyse 1999). The text is written in Old Persian only; neither an Elamite nor a Babylonian version exist. This part of the inscription also deals with historical events: a campaign against the Elamite rebel Athamaita (Perrot 2010: 26–27; also Henkelman 2008b: 4–17) and another against the Saka and their chief Skunkha (Tuplin 2010: 295–96). Yet, when compared with the previous four columns, the story appears vague: it lacks precise dating by day

and month and attributes both campaigns just to what Darius did "in the second and third year." Moreover, the king's ultimate campaign, launched against Skunkha's Saka, offers an important hint at the overall ideological framework of the Bisitun inscription. Darius states:

> (74) Afterwards, I went off with an army against Scythia (Saka); after that, the Saka who wear pointed hats came against me. <u>When I had reached the sea, [by means of a tree-trunk?] with the whole army I crossed it</u>. Afterwards I defeated the Saka utterly; another part I took captive, which was led to me in fetters. And (he) who was their chief, called Skunkha – him they took prisoner, led to me in fetters. There I made another their chief, as was my desire. After that, the country became mine (K149–51).

Although details are lacking, the broad geographical outline is clear. The campaign is launched against the "Saka who wear pointed hats" in Central Asia and not against Scythians at the northern shores of the Black Sea (Tuplin 2010: 295). But the campaign is also located in an area beyond the sea. At first glance it is unclear which sea is meant. This difficulty is compounded by damage to the text in the crucial lines 23–24. The generally accepted restoration was largely guided by preconceived conceptions that located Darius's campaign beyond the River Oxus (Amu Darya), interpreted the Old Persian term *draya* (sea) as a reference to this river, and thus expected the text in the lacuna to provide information about how this *river* was crossed. Thirty-five years ago, Walter Hinz restored [..]-*r*-*x*-[..]-*a* in the damaged line 24 (Schmitt 1991: 48) as [..*d*]-*r*-*x*-[t]-*a*, */draxta/*. According to Middle Persian *draxt* and New Persian *diraxt* (tree), this was construed to mean "tree-trunk" (ibid. 76) and Darius's army was understood to have traversed the River Oxus "by means of a tree-trunk." Yet doubts arose immediately. Rüdiger Schmitt questioned "whether this restoration really fits the space available" (ibid. 76).[8] Nor does it fit the meaning of the text.

It is important to remember here that column V and §74 represent in the development of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions a second phase where the description of events starts to become somewhat vague. The main focus of the text is not on a specific historical event in an exactly localized geographical setting but on larger ideological implications. These become visible only when we broaden our perspective to include a wider ancient Near Eastern framework. Like many royal inscriptions (especially those of Assyria: Tadmor 1981, 1997; Fales 1999–2001), our text too deals with the idea of world dominion. This concept had been paradigmatically defined already by the kings of Akkad in the third millennium (Franke 1989). The borders of their empire were identified by the Upper and Lower Seas (mentioned earlier), and this paradigm had been followed by the Assyrian kings of the first millennium (Yamada 2005; Lang and Rollinger 2010: 216–53). Although the Neo-Assyrian kings began to push the frontiers of their empire beyond the shores of the sea (Lang and Rollinger 2010: 233–53), they never claimed to have crossed this final frontier.

Against this background we understand the thrust of Darius's remarkable statement. After the ancient Akkadian king Maništūsu (2275–61), who claimed to have been victorious over "the cities across the sea" (Frayne 1993: 1.3.1, lines 13–15; cf. Lang and Rollinger, 219), he is the first king to move beyond the scope of age-old borderlines by crossing the sea with his army. His intention in Column V of the Bisitun inscription is to demonstrate that his empire has become the largest ever in world history. He has not only inherited a huge empire but also launched campaigns to regions no king before him has ever approached.[9] Such a claim could only have been developed in the context of a dialogue with the past. The sea in question is not really specified but connected with the very eastern fringes of the empire.

In any case, it looks as if in this dialogue very ancient kings, including those of Akkad, played a major role (Beaulieu 2007b: 206). The well-known heroes among the kings of Akkad were Sargon and Naram-Sîn. They figured prominently in Babylonian historicizing literature where, as we saw, history was conceptualized according to a dichotomized and biased black-and-white view (Westenholz 1997, 2010). King Nabonidus had already provided care for the monuments of these kings (Schaudig 2003; 2010: 160) and aligned his building activities with the supposed regulations of these predecessors (Schaudig 2010). Although there is no direct textual evidence that the Achaemenid kings followed this precedent, a considerable amount of indirect evidence suggests that they placed themselves in the framework of a very ancient past (Root 2010: esp. 198, 205). At least, there are clear connections between the inscriptions of Sargon and Naram-Sîn on the one hand and the Bisitun inscription on the other. Common topics include an insistence on telling the "truth," history as a sequence of military events, the fight against rebels threatening the empire as a whole, the placement of the king's victories in the first year of his rule, the use of exact numbers, and the importance of the number 9 (Franke 1989; Beaulieu 2007b: 206). Furthermore, the figural relief at Bisitun was designed according to the template of the neighboring relief at Sar-i Pol of Anubanini, probably originating at the beginning of the second millennium. Just as in Bisitun, this relief, taken to be very ancient, presents a king triumphing over a row of nine bound enemy kings and guided by divine power (Rollinger 2006a; Nasrabadi 2004).

In addition, there is an obvious correspondence between the representation of the figures in the Bisitun relief and that on the famous stele of Naram-Sîn, now one of the masterpieces in the Louvre (Feldman 2007). This stele was kept in Susa since the end of the second millennium and, it seems, treated like an exhibition piece embodying models of an ancient past. The same, incidentally, is true of the stele of King Hammurapi of Babylon which was also set up in Susa during Achaemenid times. Scholars long thought that this monument had been destroyed when Susa was allegedly looted by the Assyrian army of King Ashurbanipal (668–627) – quite wrongly. In fact, during Teispid (or even Achaemenid) times Babylonian scholars traveled to Susa to copy parts of the stele's inscription (Fadhil 1998; Charpin 2003; also Henkelman and Kleber 2007; Waerzeggers 2010; Zadok 2011).

Thus there is increasing evidence in Achaemenid times for an acute dialogue with history that was to an important extent based on Darius's self-presentation as king and the extension of his empire. The main message endorsed by this dialogue was obvious: there had never been a king like Darius and an empire like his. This empire even included areas beyond the sea, the *nagû*, as the Babylonian map of the world would put it (Horowitz 1998: 20–42; Rollinger 2003: 344–46). The consequences for our present topic are of far-reaching relevance: since world dominion had been accomplished in its ultimate form in the reign of Darius, history had reached its end. And indeed, after Darius the royal inscriptions completely change their perspective, showing a "lack of historical moment," as Ehrenberg (2008: 108) recognizes it in the carving of the Bisitun relief.

Third phase: the Achaemenid royal inscriptions during the reign of Xerxes

Only two inscriptions originating in the reign of Xerxes (484–465) contain at least minor remnants of what we may call political history. The first focuses on Darius's choice of Xerxes as his successor. Four specimens of the text survive, all from Persepolis, three in Old Persian, one in Babylonian (Schmitt 2009: 160–63; also Lecoq 1997: 254–56).

> (4) King Xerxes proclaims: Darius had other sons also; (but) thus was the desire of Auramazda: Darius, my father, made me the greatest after himself. When my father Darius went to his (allotted) place, by the favour of Auramazda I became king in my father's place. When I became king, much that (is) superior I built. What had been built by my father, that I took into my care and other work I added. But what I have done and what my father has done, all that we have done by the favour of Auramazda. (*XPf*; K244)

The second text, also from Persepolis, of which three Old Persian, one Elamite, and one Babylonian version are extant (Schmitt 2009: 164–69; Lecoq 1997: 256–58), deals with a specific situation in the empire.

> (4a) Xerxes the king proclaims: When I became king, there is among those countries which (are) inscribed above (one, which) was in turmoil (*ayauda*). Afterwards Auramazda brought me aid; by the favour of Auramazda I defeated that country and put it in its proper place.

> (4b) And among those countries there were (some) where formerly the daivas had been worshipped. Afterwards by the favour of Auramazda I destroyed that place of the daivas, and I gave orders: "The *daivas* shall not be worshipped any longer!" Wherever formerly the daivas have been worshipped, there I worshipped Auramazda at the proper time and with the proper ceremony. (*XPh*; K305).

This specific situation is described by the verb *yaud-* (to be in turmoil: Schmitt 2000: 94). The same term appears already in two inscriptions of Darius (*DNa* §4C;

DSe §5(4)D; cf. Schmitt 2009: 102, 125; K502–3, 491) where, however it does not refer to the rebellions in the king's first year (pace Lecoq 1997: 220 n.1) for which the inscriptions use another word, *hamiciya-* (K306 *ad* 6).[10] The word *yaud-* thus indicates an archetypal perspective and has nothing to do with a specific historical event. The text shows the king as the master of the universe who does not face any "real," politically motivated rebellions affecting the empire as a whole, but rather some kind of unrest, disturbance, or movement in a static world order which affects only some parts of the realm. Such turmoil is equated with the concept of worshiping the divine collective of the *daivas* who represent demonic beings or false gods (K306 n. 8) as opposed to supporting the proper order symbolized by Auramazda. This concept should not be confused with alleged ideas of an Achaemenid monotheism that would make only the veneration of Auramazda acceptable to the king, especially since the text focuses not on religion but on politics and world order. Rather, this concept is encapsulated in a symbolic and meaningful terminology in which Auramazda represents proper order and the *daivas* represent disorder. This order is timeless, just as the king, his office, and his empire are timeless. Historical events are reduced to an archetypical dichotomy between order and disorder in a static world ruled by a universal king guided by his god Auramazda (Henkelman 2008b: 9–10). In this context it does not surprise that no other persons than the king himself (and members of his family) are mentioned in these inscriptions. Even the majority of family members are just part of the royal genealogy, forming a sort of backdrop against which the king is staged as the main actor.

Yet there is another phenomenon that fits perfectly into this world of immovable stability: the lists of the peoples/countries (provinces/satrapies?) of the Achaemenid Empire that are attested only in the inscriptions of Darius and Xerxes (Hachmann 1995; Jacobs 1998). These lists are not all identical (thus hinting at minor changes)[11] but, overall, they are informed by the model of a static and, to a certain degree, unhistorical world order. After Xerxes' reign, the peoples of these countries remain visible only as throne-bearers in the reliefs at the royal tombs (Rollinger 2006b; Calmeyer 2009). In the inscriptions they disappear (except for the labels identifying the throne bearers at the tomb of *A³Pb* at Persepolis, which is a copy of King Darius's tomb at Naqsh-i Rustam: Schmitt 2009: 198–99). Thus it was mainly during Darius's and Xerxes' reigns that a (nearly) firm world order was expressed by lists of lands, whereas later even this glimpse on contemporary history was given up. Differences among these lists may be due less to actual historical changes than to royal experiments with how to express eternal world order in the framework of perennial stability (Wiesehöfer 2007b).

Fourth phase: the Achaemenid royal inscriptions after Xerxes

After Xerxes the royal inscriptions diminish further in length and are reduced to short notices (Schmitt 2009: 183–99). Even the smallest hints at historical events have vanished. No lists of countries are attested anymore. The only form of

activity recognizable in these inscriptions concerns buildings: it remains essential for the ruling king to demonstrate that he has accomplished what his father had begun. The king himself seems to have lost all individual characteristics. He is no longer an identifiable person of flesh and blood with a specific life story but an office-holder who, compared to other Achaemenid kings, has no specific features anymore. To a certain extent, these changes are mirrored even by the Greek sources in which Achaemenid kings increasingly lose their individuality. This development begins with Artaxerxes I (464–425) and continues to the end of the Achaemenid empire. Thus, for instance, both Artaxerxes I and Darius II (424–405) underscore in their inscriptions the fact that they are following the paths of their fathers and finishing the construction works at the palace initiated by them (*A¹Pa* and *D²Sb*: K316, 334). Apart from emphasizing continuity in a static world order, the perspective of the inscriptions now focuses entirely on the monarch himself who seems to have acquired an exclusive right to activity. The only place where any person other than the ruling monarch is mentioned remains the genealogies. These seem to gain even more importance in the later Achaemenid empire, when they become longer and longer (for example, *A¹I*, *D²Ha*, and especially *A²Sa* and *A³Pa*: K316, 335, 364, 406–7).

   A representative example dates to the reign of Artaxerxes III (358–338):

> Proclaims Artaxerxes, great king, king of kings, king of the countries, king on this earth: I (am) the son of Artaxerxes the king, of Artaxerxes, son of Darius the king, of Darius, son of Artaxerxes the king, of Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes the king, of Xerxes, son of Darius the king, of Darius, son of one called Hystaspes, of Hystaspes, son of one called Arsames, an Achaemenid. (*A³Pa*; K406–7, surviving only in Old Persian)

The legitimating historical consciousness thus encompasses the Achaemenid era as a whole. It even includes some of Darius I's nonroyal predecessors who are here, in contrast to Darius's own statements, clearly marked as of nonroyal origin. Yet the Teispids, like any other former kings, such as Ashurbanipal in the *Cyrus Cylinder*, are entirely excluded from this ideologically motivated view of the past.

   All this does not mean, however, that history beyond the Achaemenid kings themselves did not play any role in late Achaemenid times. There is some evidence that it did, but for this we have to look at other sources than the royal inscriptions.[12]

History beyond the Royal Inscriptions

As demonstrated above, at least in the Bisitun inscription we discern a dialogue between the Achaemenids and age-old Mesopotamian traditions. This dialogue and the concomitant historical interest were still alive in later Achaemenid times, as illustrated by royal inscriptions of pre-Achaemenid rulers that have been found in Susa. One of these, an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II, was recently misinterpreted as evidence for an alleged destruction of the ziggurat of Babylon by Xerxes

(George 2011). To the contrary, the document attests a vivid interest in the history of a more distant past, and it reflects the diligence of the Achaemenid kings in collecting such items in their palaces, just as their Babylonian and Assyrian predecessors had done. The same is true for an inscription of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669) that was also unearthed in Susa (Henkelman et al. 2011; also Heinsch and Kuntner 2011; Heinsch, Kuntner and Rollinger 2011).

Searching for other examples of this attitude, we move from Fars to Babylonia where "historiographic" traditions, developed during Neo-Babylonian times, were kept alive throughout Achaemenid times and transferred to subsequent epochs. This applies both to the *Babylonian Chronicles* and the *Astronomical Diaries* that included important historical information (Grayson 1975a; Glassner 2004; van der Spek 2003). Historical literature dealing with pre-Achaemenid affairs continued to play a certain role through Achaemenid into Late Babylonian times (Grayson 1975b; Gerardi 1986; Tadmor 1998; Spar and Lambert 2005: 203–10; also Frahm 2005). This is especially true for the so-called prophecies that describe historical events from the perspective of a *vaticinium ex eventu*. A prominent example, the *Dynastic Prophecy*, was written at the end of the Achaemenid era, interpreting history in a black-and-white dichotomy (Grayson 1975b: 24–37; van der Spek 2003: 311–24; Neujahr 2005). As we saw, this dichotomy also provides important evidence for historical criticism. Although such criticism is generally expressed in retrospective and rarely concerns contemporary events, at least one remarkable example reflects what we may call historical truthfulness conveying essentially a critical attitude. It is one of the already mentioned astronomical diaries that relate to a very recent past (on the authors, see Beaulieu 2006: 18–19) and seem to have been written relatively soon after the events in question (Rollinger and Ruffing 2011). One of them records Xerxes' death some time in the second half of the fifth month of his 21st regal year (465/4): "Abu, 14 + x: Xerxes' son killed him" (*BM* 32334; K306). The text leaves no doubt about what has happened, even though the murderer is a member of the royal family, very probably Artaxerxes himself who immediately succeeded his father on the throne (Wiesehöfer 2007a). The text keeps silent about this fact but, without naming the murderer, clearly states that it was the king's son who committed the crime. This provides remarkable evidence for a historical tradition that kept the memory of facts and deeds alive in ways that differed from those of the king and his court.[13]

A Short Comment on Authors and Audience

It is a pity that extant sources hardly ever mention the intended audience – information in which the modern historian is so greatly interested. This applies not only to Achaemenid but to ancient Near Eastern history in general. Hence most of our evidence is indirect by nature. Yet at least for the dissemination of the content of the royal inscriptions seminal evidence comes from Bisitun itself.

> (60) Now, let what (has been) done by me convince you; proclaim it thus to the people, do not conceal it! If you do not conceal this record, (but) proclaim (it) to the people, may Auramazda be a friend to you, may you have offspring in great number and may you live long!
>
> (61) Darius the king proclaims: If you conceal this record and do not proclaim it to the people, may Auramazda be your destroyer and may you have no offspring! (K148)

The content has to be proclaimed to the people, and they have to be convinced by the king's report. This effort is mirrored by the fact that the Bisitun inscription, like many other Achaemenid royal inscriptions, was translated into other languages. As Bisitun itself shows, Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian were the most important ones, but a version in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Achaemenid Empire, survived in Egypt, dating to around 400 (mentioned above). Versions of the text were thus in circulation for a very long time, and its impact lasted even longer: the opening chapters of the (Apocryphal or deutero-canonical) Biblical *Book of Judith*, composed in Maccabean times, were still influenced by the Bisitun inscription (Rollinger 2009). The same Aramaic manuscript also included one of Darius's tomb inscriptions from Naqsh-i Rustam (Schmitt 1986; Sims-Williams 1981; Tavernier 2001).

Hence, in being translated and disseminated all over the multilingual empire, the Bisitun texts were no exception. This process resulted in some adaptations and changes of the text, most clearly visible in the Babylonian version of Bisitun found at Babylon (Seidl 1999a, 1999b), where Auramazda is replaced by Bel, that is, the supreme Babylonian god Marduk. There may even have existed a Greek version of the text which would answer the vexed question of how Herodotus received his information about the events revolving around Darius's accession to power. On the other hand, although §§60–61 focus on the people of the empire, evidently the most important addressees of Darius's report were the ruling classes, the office-holders in the provinces and cities, high and low, on whose support any ruler depended. This was hardly much different in the preceding empires (Ponchia 2007; for multilingualism, see Fales 2007). These learned men, educated and literate, were running the royal chanceries in the core areas of the empire. They were also part of the temple administration where, in Achaemenid times, structures were developed that are comparable to those of the later Museion in Alexandria (Beaulieu 2006; Goldstein 2010). It is in these circles that we should look for the authors of our texts (Rollinger 2013b).

Abbreviations

ED   Early Dynastic
BM   British Museum (tablet signature)
JNES   *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
K   Kuhrt 2007b.
OHCC   Radner and Robson 2011.

PF   Persepolis Fortification Tablet (tablet signature)
RIME   *Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods* (1 = Frayne 2008; 2 = Frayne 1993; 4 = Frayne 1990)
SAAB   *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*
ZA   *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*

Notes

1   All dates are BCE unless indicated otherwise. Inscriptions are cited according to the sigla introduced by Kent 1953. Thus, e.g., DNa = (Inscription of King) Darius (from) Naqsh-i Rustam, (Number) a, A³Pb = (Inscription of King) Artaxerxes III (from) Persepolis, (Number) b.

2   According to *Etymologies* 1.42 "the first to write history" was Moses.

3   There is an earlier example of a foreign king chosen by the supreme god Marduk. Two of Nabonidus's inscriptions record that Marduk chose Cyrus to overcome the Median king Ištumegu/Astyages (Schaudig 2001: 416–17: *Ehulhul-Cylinder* I 15–29; 473: *Harrān-Cylinder* I' 7'–17'; see Rollinger 2010: 78–79). The *Cyrus-Cylinder* may thus have been modeled along an already existing template.

4   Ashurbanipal remained an important king in Babylonian tradition at least until Parthian times (Goldstein 2010).

5   The concept is a basic element of Babylonian historical literature and royal ideology (Westenholz 1997, 2008, 2010, 2011). Nabonidus too made use of it by qualifying his predecessors in a deprecatory manner. See, e.g., an epic fragment that seems to treat Evil-Merodach (Amel-Marduk) pejoratively (Grayson 1975b: 87–92; Schaudig 2001: 589–90) or the negative assessment of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V by his successor Sargon II (Fuchs 2011b: 1239bf.); on this topic generally, Schwinghammer 2011a.

6   In Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions that focus very much on events we have to reckon with certain forms of "abstraction": "There was never any intention to convey a precise picture of real events. Instead they [these inscriptions] depict only the key episodes, which, taken together, tell us not what actually happened, but what should have happened" (Fuchs 2011a: 385). According to Liverani 2011: 48 the Bisitun inscription "echoes Assyrian motifs" but is "more standardized and repetitive."

7   On the relationship between truth, justice, and loyalty in the older Mesopotamian tradition, see also Sasson 2011: 200.

8   Schmitt continues: "*d-r-y*: OP /*drayah-*/ signifies the sea, perhaps lakes, too, but certainly not rivers, so that the River Oxus or Iaxartes cannot be meant here." Thus he translates: "when I had come down by the sea. By means of tree-trunk with the whole army I crossed it." But how can the sea be crossed with a tree-trunk?

9   Cf. also *DPg* where Darius, in a more general way, claims to have ruled countries "beyond the sea" (Lecoq 1997: 230). For the "Greeks beyond the sea," see Rollinger 2007: 213.

10 Note also the whole passage of *DSe* §5D–E: "The lands were in turmoil, one smiting the other," which obviously refers to an archetypical and not a specific unrest. Similar conceptions may have existed already in the Babylonian tradition; see, e.g., *RIME* 4.8.1 (Ašdūni-iarīm of Kiš, 19th c. BCE); Marzahn 1999: 271.

11 For example, in *XPh*, compared to the other lists, the Dahae and Akaufaka are added and the peoples of east and west are jumbled.

12   Whether the scheme of successive world empires also originated in Achaemenid times, as some scholars have proposed, may be doubted. It certainly does not fit into the outline developed in this paper (see also Wiesehöfer and Rollinger 2012). Most recent research rather hints at a background in Greek historiography (Wiesehöfer 2003, 2004).

13   This sheds doubt on Frahm's conclusion (2011: 526) that "the close association between scholars and kings thus prevented the emergence, in ancient Mesopotamia, of more radical lines of study and of more critical forms of scholarship that could have triggered or accelerated political and cultural change. Ancient Mesopotamia, it seems, was no fertile ground for the autonomous, unattached individual thinkers or 'intellectuals' who, according to Karl Jaspers, brought about the 'axial revolutions' of the period between 800 and 200 BC that took place in China, India and the eastern Mediterranean. Unlike their colleagues in those regions, the Babylonian and Assyrian *literati* were never able to shake off the influence of the palace and temple, which managed to control and essentially monopolize what Michael Mann has defined as 'ideological power'."

References

Barney, S.A., W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and O. Berghof. 2010. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville.* Cambridge.

Beaulieu, P.-A. 2006. "De l'Esagil au Mouseion: L'organisation de la recherche scientifique au IVe siècle avant J.-C." In P. Briant and F. Joannès (eds.), *La transition entre l'empire achéménide et les royaumes hellénistiques (vers 350–300 av. J.-C.),* 17–36. Paris.

Beaulieu, P.-A. 2007a. "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of his Steles from Harran and Babylon." In Heinz and Feldman 2007: 137–66.

Beaulieu, P.-A. 2007b. "Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium B.C. Mesopotamia." In S.L. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing: Origins of Cultures*, 191–220. Chicago.

Bichler, R., and R. Rollinger. 2011. *Herodot. Eine Einführung.* 3rd edn. Hildesheim.

Boda, M.J., and J. Novotny (eds.). 2010. *From the Foundations to the Crenellations. Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible.* Münster.

Borger, R. 1982. "Die Chronologie des Darius-Denkmals am Behistun-Felsen. " In *Nachrichten Akad. Wiss. Göttingen 1982*, phil.-hist. Kl., 105–31. Göttingen.

Briant, P. 2002. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire.* Winona Lake, IN. Orig. French edn. Paris, 1996.

Brosius, M. 2006. *The Persians: An Introduction.* London.

Calmeyer, P. 2009. Die Reliefs der Gräber V und VI in Persepolis. Mainz.

Charpin, D. 2003. "Les soldats d'Assurbanipal ont-ils détruit le Code de Hammu-rabi lors du sac de Suse? " *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* 2003: 87–88.

Cwik-Rosenbach, M. 1990. "Zeitverständnis und Geschichtsschreibung in Mesopotamien." *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 42: 1–20.

da Riva, R. 2008. *The Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions: An Introduction.* Münster.

Ehrenberg, E. 2008. "*Dieu et mon droit*: Kingship in Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times." In N. Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, 103–31. Chicago.

Fadhil, A. 1998. "Der Prolog des Codex Hammurapi in einer Abschrift aus Sippar." In *XXXIVème Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, 718–29. Istanbul.

Fales, F.M. 1999–2001. "Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: Newer Horizons." In *SAAB* 13: 115–44.

Fales, F.M. 2007. "Multilingualism on Multiple Media in the Neo-Assyrian Period: A Review of the Evidence." In *SAAB* 16: 95–122.

Feldman, M.H. 2007. "Darius I and the Heroes of Akkad: Affect and Agency in the Bisitun Relief." In J. Cheng and M.H. Feldman (eds.), *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students*, 265–93. Leiden.

Feldherr, A., and G. Hardy (eds.). 2011. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, I: *Beginnings to AD 600*. Oxford.

Foxhall, L., H.-J. Gehrke, and N. Luraghi (eds.). 2010. *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*. Stuttgart.

Frahm, E. 2005. "On Some Recently Published Late Babylonian Copies of Royal Letters." *Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires* 2005: 43–46.

Frahm, E. 2011. "Keeping Company with Men of Learning: The King as Scholar." *OHCC* 508–32.

Franke, S. 1989. *Königsinschriften und Königsideologie. Die Könige von Akkade zwischen Tradition und Neuerung*. Münster.

Frayne, D.R. 1990. *RIME* 4: *Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC)*. Toronto.

Frayne, D.R. 1993. *RIME* 2: *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC)*. Toronto.

Frayne, D.R. 2008. *RIME* 1: *Presargonic Period (2700–2350 BC)*. Toronto.

Fuchs, A. 2011a. "Assyria at War: Strategy and Conduct." *OHCC* 380–401.

Fuchs, A. 2011b. "Šarru-kênu, Šarru-kīn, Šarru-ukīn." In H.D. Baker (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, III.2 (Š-Z): 1239–47. Helsinki.

Gehrke, H.-J. 2010. "Greek Representations of the Past." In Foxhall et al. 2010: 15–33.

George, A.R. 2011. "A Stele of Nebuchadnezzar II." In A.R. George (ed.), *Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions and Related Texts in the Schøyen Collection*, 153–69. Bethesda.

Gerardi, P. 1986. "Declaring War in Mesopotamia." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 33: 30–38.

Glassner, J.-J. 2004. *Mesopotamian Chronicles*. Atlanta.

Goldstein, R. 2010. "Late Babylonian Letters on Collecting Tablets and Their Hellenistic Background – a Suggestion." *JNES* 69: 199–207.

Grayson, A.K. 1975a. *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*. Locust Valley. Repr. 2000.

Grayson, A.K. 1975b. *Babylonian Historical-literary Texts*. Toronto.

Greenfield, J.C., and B. Porten. 1982. *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great: Aramaic Version*. London.

Grillot-Susini, F., C. Herrenschmidt, and F. Malbran-Labat. 1993. "La version élamite de la trilingue de Behistun: Une nouvelle lecture." *Journal Asiatique* 282: 19–59.

Hachmann, R. 1995. "Die Völkerschaften auf den Bildwerken von Persepolis." In U. Finkbeiner, R. Dittmann, and H. Hauptmann (eds.), *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Vorderasiens. Festschrift für Rainer Michael Boehmer*, 195–223. Mainz.

Harrison, T. 2011. *Writing Ancient Persia*. London.

Heinsch, S., and W. Kuntner. 2011. "Herodot und die Stadtmauern Babylons. Bemerkungen zur archäologischen Befundsituation der Landmauern." In Rollinger et al. 2011: 499–529.

Heinsch, S., W. Kuntner, and R. Rollinger. 2011. "Von Herodot zur angeblichen Verödung babylonischer Stadtviertel in achaimenidischer Zeit: kritische Bemerkungen zum archäologischen Befund auf dem Merkes sowie zur vermeintlichen Zerstörung des Tempels der Ištar von Akkade durch Xerxes im Jahre 484 v.Chr." In Rollinger et al. 2011: 471–98.

Heinz, M., and M.H. Feldman (eds.). 2007. *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East.* Winona Lake, IN.

Henkelman, W.F. 2003a. "An Elamite Memorial: The *šumar* of Cambyes and Hystaspes." In Henkelman and Kuhrt 2003: 101–72.

Henkelman, W.F. 2003b. "Persians, Medes and Elamites: Acculturation in the Neo-Elamite Period." In G. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, and R. Rollinger (eds.), *Continuity of Empire (?). Assyria, Media, Persia,* 181–231. Padova.

Henkelman, W.F. 2008a: "From Gabae to Taoce: The Geography of the Central Administrative Province." In P. Briant, W. Henkelman, and M. Stolper (eds.), *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis. État des questions et perspectives de recherches,* 303–16. Paris.

Henkelman, W.F. 2008b. *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts.* Leiden.

Henkelman, W.F. 2011. "Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Elamite: A Case of Mistaken Identity." In Rollinger et al. 2011: 577–634.

Henkelman, W.F. and K. Kleber. 2007. "Babylonian Workers in the Persian Heartland: Palace Building at Matannan during the Reign of Cambyses." In C. Tuplin (ed.), *Persian Responses: Political and Cultural Interaction with(in) the Achaemenid Empire*, 163–76. Swansea.

Henkelman, W.F., and A. Kuhrt (eds.). 2003. *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg.* Leiden.

Henkelman, W.F., A. Kuhrt, R. Rollinger, and J. Wiesehöfer. 2011. "Herodotus and Babylon Reconsidered." In Rollinger et al. 2011: 449–70.

Henninger, J. 1983. "Genealogien und Geschichtsbewusstsein bei semitischen Völkern." In P. Snoy (ed.), *Ethnologie und Geschichte. Festschrift für Karl Jettmar*, 245–61. Wiesbaden.

Horowitz, W. 1998. *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography.* Winona Lake, IN.

Huyse, P. 1999. "Some Further Thoughts on the Bisitun Monument and the Genesis of the Old Persian Cuneiform Script." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 13: 45–66.

Huyse, P. 2005. *La Perse antique.* Paris.

Jacobs, B. 1998. *Die Satrapienverwaltung im Perserreich zur Zeit Darius' III.* Wiesbaden.

Jacobs, B. 2011. "'Kyros, der große König, der Achämenide.' Zum verwandtschaftlichen Verhältnis und zur politischen und kulturellen Kontinuität zwischen Kyros dem Großen und Dareios I." In Rollinger et al. 2011: 635–63.

Jursa, M. 2005. *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents: Typology, Contents and Archives.* Münster.

Jursa, M. 2007. "The Transition of Babylonia from the Neo-Babylonian Empire to Achaemenid Rule." In H. Crawford (ed.), *Regime Change in the Ancient Near East and Egypt: From Sargon of Agade to Saddam Hussein*, 73–94. London.

Kellens, J. 2002. "L'idéologie religieuse des inscriptions Achéménides." *Journal Asiatique* 290.2: 417–64.

Kent, R.G. 1953. *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon.* New Haven.

Kratz, R.G. 1991. *Kyros im Deuterojesaja: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Theologie von Jes* 40–55. Tübingen.

Kuhrt, A. 2007a. "Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities." In Heinz and Feldman 2007: 169–91.

Kuhrt, A. 2007b. *The Persian Empire.* 2 vols. London.

Lämmerhirt, K. 2010. *Wahrheit und Trug. Untersuchungen zur altorientalischen Begriffsgeschichte.* Münster.

Lanfranchi, G., and R. Rollinger (eds.). 2010. *Concepts of Kingship in Antiquity*. Padova.

Lang, M., and R. Rollinger. 2010. "Im Herzen der Meere und in der Mitte des Meeres. Das Buch Ezechiel und die in assyrischer Zeit fassbaren Vorstellungen von den Grenzen der Welt." In R. Rollinger, B. Gufler, M. Lang, and I. Madreiter (eds.), *Interkulturalität in der Alten Welt: Vorderasien, Hellas, Ägypten und die vielfältigen Ebenen des Kontakts*, 207–64. Wiesbaden.

Lecoq, P. (trans.). 1997. *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide*. Paris.

Lenzi, A. 2008. *Secrecy and the Gods. Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel.* Helsinki.

Liverani, M. 2000. Review of van de Mieroop 1999. *Orientalia* 69: 330–32.

Liverani, M. 2011. "Later Mesopotamia." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011: 29–52.

Livingstone, A. 2007. "Ashurbanipal: Literate or not?" *ZA* 97: 98–118.

Lloyd, G.E.R. 2011. "Epilogue." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011: 601–19.

Marzahn, J. 1999. "Ašdūni-arīm von Kiš – eine unbekannte Inschrift." In B. Böck, E. Cancik-Kirschbaum, and T. Richter (eds.), *Munuscula Mesopotamica. Festschrift für Johannes Renger*, 267–76. Münster.

Maul, S.M. 1998. "Im Fadenkreuz von Raum und Zeit." *Heidelberger Jahrbücher* 42: 27–41.

Maul, S.M. 2003. "Babylon." *Brill's New Pauly* 2: 441–42.

Mehl, A. 2011. *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development*. Trans. H.-F. Müller. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Näf, B. 2010. *Antike Geschichtsschreibung. Form – Leistung – Wirkung*. Stuttgart.

Nasrabadi, B.M. 2004. "Beobachtungen zum Felsrelief Anubaninis." *ZA* 94: 291–303.

Neujahr, M. 2005. "When Darius Defeated Alexander: Composition and Redaction in the Dynastic Prophecy." *JNES* 64.2: 101–7.

Parpola, S. 1993. *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*. Helsinki.

Perrot, J. (ed.). 2010. *Le palais de Darius à Suse. Une résidence royale sur la route de Persépolis à Babylone*. Paris.

Ponchia, S. 2007. "Communicational Procedures and Administrative Structures in the Neo-Assyrian Empire." *SAAB* 16: 123–43.

Pongratz-Leisten, B. 1999. *Herrschaftswissen in Mesopotamien*. Helsinki.

Pongratz-Leisten, B. 2002. "'Lying King' and 'False Prophet': The Intercultural Transfer of a Rhetorical Device within Ancient Near Eastern Ideologies." In Antonio Panaino and Giovanni Pettinato (eds.), *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena*, 215–43. Milan.

Raaflaub, K. 2010. "Ulterior Motives in Ancient Historiography: What Exactly, and Why?" In Foxhall et al. 2010: 189–210.

Radner, K., and E. Robson (eds.). 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford.

Rollinger, R. 1998. "Der Stammbaum des achaimenidischen Königshauses oder die Frage der Legitimität der Herrschaft des Dareios." *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan* 30: 155–209.

Rollinger, R. 2003. "Homer, Anatolien und die Levante: Die Frage der Beziehungen zu den östlichen Nachbarkulturen im Spiegel der schriftlichen Quellen." In Christoph Ulf (ed.), *Der neue Streit um Troia. Eine Bilanz*, 330–48. Munich.

Rollinger, R. 2006a. "Ein besonderes historisches Problem: Die Thronbesteigung des Dareios und die Frage seiner Legitimität." In *Pracht und Prunk der Großkönige. Das Persische Weltreich*, 41–53. Stuttgart.

Rollinger, R. 2006b. "*Yaunā takabarā* und *maginnāta* tragende 'Ionier'. Zum Problem der 'griechischen' Throntträgerfiguren in Naqsch-i Rustam und Persepolis." In Rollinger and B. Truschnegg (eds.), *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider*, 365–400. Stuttgart.

Rollinger, R. 2007. "The Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond: The Relations between the Worlds of the 'Greek' and 'Non-Greek' Civilizations." In Konrad H. Kinzl (ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Greek World*, 197–226. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Rollinger, R. 2009. "Altorientalisches im Buch Judith." In M. Luukko, S. Svärd, and R. Mattila (eds.), *Of God(s), Trees, Kings, and Scholars: Neo-Assyrian and Related Studies in Honour of Simo Parpola*, 429–43. Helsinki.

Rollinger, R. 2010. "Das medische Königtum und die medische Suprematie im sechsten Jahrhundert v.Chr." In Lanfranchi and Rollinger 2010: 63–85.

Rollinger, R. 2011. "Herrscherkult bei Teispiden und Achaimeniden. Realität oder Fiktion?" In L.-M. Günther and S. Plischke (eds.), *Studien zum vorhellenistischen und hellenistischen Herrscherkult*, 11–54. Berlin.

Rollinger, R. 2013a. "Von Kyros bis Xerxes: Babylon in persischer Zeit und die Frage der Bewertung des herodoteischen Geschichtswerkes – eine Nachlese." In M. Krebernik and H. Neumann (eds.), *Geburtstagskolloquium zu Ehren von Joachim Oelsner*. Münster.

Rollinger, R. 2013b. "Royal Strategies of Representation and the Language(s) of Power: Some Considerations on the Programmatic Character of the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions." Forthcoming in S. Procházka, L. Reinfandt, S. Tost, and Kl. Wagensonner (eds.), *Official Epistolography and the Language(s) of Power*. Vienna.

Rollinger, R., and K. Ruffing. 2011. "'Panik' im Heer – Dareios III., die Schlacht von Gaugamela und die Mondfinsternis vom 20. September 331 v.Chr." *Iranica Antiqua* 47: 101–15.

Rollinger, R., B. Truschnegg, and R. Bichler (eds.). 2011. *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich – Herodotus and the Persian Empire*. Wiesbaden.

Root, M.C. 2010. "Palace to Temple – King to Cosmos: Achaemenid Foundation Texts in Iran." In Boda and Novotny 2010: 165–210.

Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. 1999. "The Persian Kings and History." In C. Shuttleworth Kraus (ed.), *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*, 91–112. Leiden.

Sasson, J.M. 2011. "Mari Theomorphism: Imitation of Sacrality in the Royal Correspondence." In Luděk Vacín (ed.), u_4 du_{11}-*ga-ni sá mu-ni-ib-du*$_{11}$. *Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Blahoslav Hruška*, 195–212. Dresden.

Schaudig, H. 2001. *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften*. Münster.

Schaudig, H. 2002. "Nabonid, der 'Gelehrte auf dem Königsthron'. Omina, Synkretismen und die Ausdeutung von Tempel- und Götternamen als Mittel zur Wahrheitsfindung spätbabylonischer Religionspolitik." In O. Loretz, K. Metzler, and H. Schaudig (eds.), *Ex Mesopotamia et Syria Lux. Festschrift für Manfried Dietrich*, 619–45. Münster.

Schaudig, H. 2003. "Nabonid, der 'Archäologe auf dem Königsthron'. Zum Geschichtsbild des ausgehenden neubabylonischen Reiches." In Gebhart J. Selz (ed.), *Festschrift für Burkhart Kienast*, 447–97. Münster.

Schaudig, H. 2010. "The Restoration of Temples in the Neo- and Late Babylonian Periods: A Royal Prerogative as the Setting for Political Argument." In Boda and Novotny 2010: 141–64.

Schmitt, R. 1980. "Zur babylonischen Version der Bīsutūn-Inschrift." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 27: 106–26.

Schmitt, R. 1986. "Bīsutūn – Babylon – Elephantine. Dareios' Thema mit Variationen." In W. Meid and H. Trenkwalder (eds.), *Im Bannkreis des Alten Orients. Studien zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients und seines Ausstrahlungsraumes*, 223–30. Innsbruck.

Schmitt, R. 1991. *The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great. Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, I.1.1. London.

Schmitt, R. 1992. "Die Sprachverhältnisse im Achaimenidenreich." In R.B. Finazzi and P. Tornaghi (eds.), *Lingue e culture in contatto nel mondo antico e altomedievale*, 77–102. Brescia.

Schmitt, R. 2000. *The Old Persian inscriptions of Naqsh-i Rustam and Persepolis. Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, I.1.2. London.

Schmitt, R. 2009. *Die altpersischen Inschriften der Achaimeniden*. Editio minor mit deutscher Übersetzung. Wiesbaden.

Schwinghammer, G. 2011a. "Dareios, die Wahrheit und die Rolle der Gewalt." In P. Mauritsch (ed.), *Akten des 13. Österreichischen Althistorikerinnen- und Althistorikertages*, 209–16. Graz.

Schwinghammer, G. 2011b. "Die Smerdis Story – Der Usurpator, Dareios und die Bestrafung der 'Lügenkönige'." In Rollinger et al. 2011: 665–87.

Seidl, U. 1999a. "Ein Monument Darius' I. aus Babylon." *ZA* 89: 101–14.

Seidl, U. 1999b. "Eine Triumphstele Darius' I. aus Babylon." In Johannes Renger (ed.), *Babylon: Focus Mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne*, 297–306. Saarbrücken.

Sims-Williams, N. 1981. "The Final Paragraph of the Tomb-inscription of Darius I (DNb, 50–60): The Old Persian Text in the Light of an Aramaic Version." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 44: 1–7.

Spar, I., and W.G. Lambert. 2005. *Literary and Scholastic Texts of the First Millennium B.C.* New York.

Steible, H., and H. Behrens. 1982. *Die altsumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften*, II. Wiesbaden.

Tadmor, H. 1981. "History and Ideology in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions." In F.M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons in Literary, Ideological, and Historical Analysis*, 13–35. Rome.

Tadmor, H. 1997. "Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscription." In S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995. Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Corpus Project*, 325–38. Helsinki.

Tadmor, H. 1998. "Nabopalassar and Sin-shum-lishir in a Literary Perspective." In S.M. Maul (ed.), *tikip santakki mala bašmu. Festschrift für Rykle Borger,* 353–57. Groningen.

Tavernier, J. 2001. "An Achaemenid Royal Inscription: The Text of Paragraph 13 of the Aramaic Version of the Bisitun Inscription." *JNES* 60.3: 161–76.

Thapar, R. 2011. "Historic Traditions in Early India: c. 1000 BC to c. AD 600." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011: 553–76.

Tuplin, C. 2010. "Revisiting Dareios' Scythian Expedition." In J. Nieling and E. Rehm (eds.), *Achaemenid Impact in the Black Sea: Communication of Power*, 281–312. Aarhus.

van de Mieroop, M. 1997. "On Writing a History of the Ancient Near East." *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 54: 285–305.

van de Mieroop, M. 1999. *Cuneiform Texts and the Writing of History*. London.

van de Mieroop, M. 2012. "The Mesopotamians and their Past." In Wiesehöfer and Krüger 2012: 37–56.

van der Spek, R.J. 2003. "Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship." In Henkelman and Kuhrt 2003: 289–346.

van Dongen, E. 2011. "Propaganda im frühen Perserreich (ca. 550–500 v. Chr.)." In
    M. Fahlenbock, L. Madersbacher, and I. Schneider (eds.), *Inszenierung des Sieges − Sieg
    der Inszenierung*, 173–80. Innsbruck.

van Seters, J. 2011. "Historiography in Ancient Israel." In Feldherr and Hardy 2011:
    76–96.

von Voigtlander, E.N.. 1978. *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great: Babylonian Version.
    Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, I.2.1. London.

Waerzeggers, C. 2010. "Babylonians in Susa: The Travels of Babylonian Businessmen to
    Susa Reconsidered." In B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (eds.), *Der achaimenidische Hof − The
    Achaemenid Court*, 777–813. Wiesbaden.

Westenholz, J.G. 1997. *Legends of the Kings of Akkade: The Texts*. Winona Lake, IN.

Westenholz, J.G. 2008. "The Memory of Sargonic Kings under the Third Dynasty of Ur."
    In P. Michalowski (ed.), *On the Third Dynasty of Ur: Studies in Honor of Marcel Sigrist*,
    251–60. Boston.

Westenholz, J.G. 2010. "Historical Events and the Process of Their Transformation." In D.
    Konstan and K.A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Epic and History*, 26–50. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Westenholz, J.G. 2011. "The Transmission and Reception of the Sargonic Sagas in the Hittite
    World." In M. Hutter and S. Hutter-Braunsar (eds.), *Hethitische Literatur. Überlieferungs-
    prozesse, Textstrukturen, Ausdrucksformen und Nachwirken*, 285–303. Münster.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. 2003. "Vom 'oberen Asien' zur 'gesamten bewohnten Welt'. Die helle-
    nistisch-römische Weltreiche-Theorie." In M. Delgado, K. Koch, and E. Marsch (eds.),
    *Europa, Tausendjähriges Reich und Neue Welt. Zwei Jahrtausende Geschichte und Utopie in
    der Rezeption des Danielbuches*, 66–83. Fribourg and Stuttgart.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. 2004. "Daniel, Herodot und 'Dareios der Meder': Auch ein Beitrag zur
    Idee der Abfolge von Weltreichen." In R. Rollinger (ed.), *Von Sumer bis Homer. Festschrift
    für Manfred Schretter*, 647–53. Münster.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. 2005. *Das antike Persien. Von 550 v.Chr. bis 650 n.Chr*. Düsseldorf.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. 2007a. "Die Ermordung des Xerxes: Abrechnung mit einem Despoten
    oder eigentlicher Beginn einer Herrschaft?" In B. Bleckmann (ed.), *Herodot und die
    Epoche der Perserkriege. Realitäten und Fiktionen, 3–19*. Cologne.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. 2007b. "Ein König erschließt und imaginiert sein Imperium: Persische
    Reichsordnung und persische Reichsbilder zur Zeit Dareios I. (522–486 v.Chr.)." In
    M. Rathmann (ed.), *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*,
    31–40. Mainz.

Wiesehöfer, Josef. 2008. "Gerechtigkeit und Recht im achaimenidischen Iran." In H. Barta,
    R. Rollinger, and M. Lang (eds.), *Recht und Religion. Menschliche und göttliche
    Gerechtigkeitsvorstellungen in den Welten*, 191–203. Wiesbaden.

Wiesehöfer, J., and T. Krüger (eds.). 2012. *Periodisierung und Epochenbewusstsein im Alten
    Testament und seiner Umwelt*. Stuttgart.

Wiesehöfer, J., and R. Rollinger. 2012. "Periodisierung und Epochenbewusstsein in
    achaimenidischer Zeit." In Wiesehöfer and Krüger 2012: 57–85.

Yamada, K. 2005. "'From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea' – The Development of the
    Names of Seas in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions." In *Orient: Reports of the Society for
    Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 40: 31–55.

Zadok, R. 2011. "The Babylonia–Elam Connections in the Chaldean and Achaemenid
    Periods (pt. I)." *Tel Aviv* 38: 120–43.

11

Historical Texts in the Hebrew Bible?

Marc Zvi Brettler

Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern History

This essay deals with history in the context of the ancient Israelite religious traditions. In this way, the Bible is similar to the other traditions examined in this volume, which also are often explicitly and implicitly concerned with the intersection of religion and history. The idea of divine involvement in ancient Near Eastern history is well documented (Albrektson 1967; Parker 1997: 137–42), and in some cases, such texts invoke "dual causality," where divine and human actions are intertwined (Amit 1987).

Yet, biblical historical texts differ in important ways from other ancient Near Eastern texts.[1] No biblical text in its current form is contemporaneous with the events it records. Even if the Israelites followed what we believe was on occasion the Mesopotamian practice of having scribes with their writing boards at battles or recording booty at home (Russell 1991: 30–1), the texts that we now have are centuries later than the events they depict, and have gone through a very complex and uncertain history of editing and transmission (on Assyrian transmission and revision, see Levine 1981; Cogan 2005). We have some nonbiblical Israelite texts that are contemporaneous with the events they describe, such as the late eighth-century inscription upon the completion of the Siloam tunnel, built to bring water to Jerusalem when it was besieged by the Assyrians in 701 (Pritchard 1969: 321), but these are very unlike the biblical texts.

In contrast to ancient Near Eastern texts, the Hebrew Bible (I am using the terms Bible and Hebrew Bible interchangeably for the Old Testament) is a multivocal, edited work (van Seters 2006). It is composed by a vassal, not by a great imperial power, unlike most of the other texts considered in this volume. It was written over a thousand-year time-period,[2] and the first nine books of the Hebrew Bible, Genesis through Kings (here and elsewhere I am following the Jewish order and enumeration of biblical books) present a very long time-period, from creation until the sixth century BCE. (The latest dated event, in 2 Kings 25:27, dates to 561.) In addition, the Bible is but a small and biased slice of the literature that ancient Israel produced, and we cannot take it as normative for the community as a whole. Here too the situation differs somewhat from the rest of the ancient Near East, where elite official literature is supplemented by other types of works, such as letters and economic documents (Pritchard 1969). We only have a small number of such writings from ancient Israel (Pritchard 1969; Pardee 1982; Hallo and Younger 1997–2002), and we have yet to uncover any archive from Israel. For climatic reasons, ancient Israelite writing on papyrus and various forms of leather from the biblical period would not have survived, unless, like the exceptional Dead Sea Scrolls, it was stored in an extremely dry place.

Biblical texts are much longer than contemporary ancient Near Eastern literature, where there is, for instance, nothing comparable in length to the Book of Samuel. This may be somewhat influenced by writing materials – it is difficult to write a single continuous work of this length using cuneiform on clay, though some quite long cuneiform documents have survived, most notably the twelve-tablet Epic of Gilgamesh, which contained over three thousand lines. The editing and continuous reediting of biblical books, which involved expansion through supplementation and incorporation of sources encouraged long books (van Seters 2006; for an example, see Römer 2005). In terms of style and length some of the biblical historical documents are more similar to their Greek rather than their Semitic counterparts, though I do not believe that they knew, and were influenced by, the Greek historical writing of Herodotus or Thucydides (contra Wesselius 2002).

Nor do I believe that the Israelites were significantly more literate than their neighbors, facilitating the development of long, continuous history in ancient Israel. Much work remains to be done on literacy in the ancient world. Some scholars have inferred widespread literacy from a tenth-century abecedary in Tel Zayit in Israel (Tappy and McCarter 2008). Others have assumed widespread Israelite literacy since the alphabet is so much easier to master than either Egyptian hieroglyphics or Mesopotamian cuneiform, while other have noted that an "easy" alphabet does not automatically facilitate widespread literacy (Carr 2005: 116–24; Young 2005; Hess 2006). Literacy in Israel was similar to that of its neighbors – a small class of people in the court and temple were literate, and much of Israelite culture should be understood from one of the perspectives of oral rather than written tradition (Niditch 1996; Dundes 1999), though oral and written cultures should not be viewed as an absolute dichotomy (Goody 1977; Finnegan 2007). Studies of the rabbinic period suggest a literacy rate of 3% among males or perhaps

slightly higher (Bar-Ilan 1992; Hezser 2001); I do not see why the rate of literacy would have fallen from the biblical to the rabbinic period.

Defining History

There are almost as many definitions of history as there are those who engage in historiography; I prefer the definition "a narrative that depicts a past" (Brettler 1995: 12). This definition is maximalistic in several ways. "Narrative" is a very broad category of X telling Y about Z, and broader than "story," a particular type of narrative with a beginning, middle, and end (Scholes 1981: 206). If I were working with different Near Eastern cultures, I would be even broader, including reliefs that present a past (see, for Assyria, Russell 1999), just as other essays in this volume study pictures.

Historical narratives depict or represent, or perhaps better still map (Gaddis 2002) "*a* past" rather than "*the* past." In the case of biblical historical texts, it is often extremely difficult to determine whether or not a particular narrative is depicting the real past – whatever that might mean. It is also hard to judge whether or not an author is *intending* to depict the real past, even if he gets it wrong – it is not easy to determine intentions.[3]

This definition of history covers all biblical texts that are narrated in the past or perfect or related forms – this would include approximately half of the Hebrew Bible.[4] This excludes many biblical texts, such as prophecies that are in the future or imperfect, petitionary prayers that are in the imperative, or proverbs such as 11:1, "False scales, an abomination to the LORD; an honest weight, His desire," which are often nominal, and present a current situation (there is no verbal present tense in Biblical Hebrew).

This definition does not distinguish between story and history (Brettler 1995: 161, n. 140), and between "history" and what is often called "myth" (Brettler 1995: 153, n. 44; Garbini 2003: esp. vii). The definitions of myth are as numerous as those of history (Csapo 2005). Some definitions of myth emphasize that such stories deal with the distant past, and indeed, some biblical texts may recognize a mythic era. For example, Deuteronomy 4:32 speaks of "bygone ages that came before you, ever since God created man on earth," and a small number of psalms talk either about creation, or about the "history" of Israel, but do not mix the two (e.g., Psalms 78, 105, 106); such texts, however, are unusual. There is no formal break or stylistic distinction in the book of Genesis between parts describing what some would call myth versus those dealing with history. Psalm 136 moves seamlessly from (v. 5) "Who made the heavens with wisdom" to (v. 13) "Who split the Sea of Reeds," and to (v. 21) "and gave their land [of the Trans-Jordan kings] as a heritage." Ancient Israelites could distinguish between recent and long-past events, but the Bible does not consider narratives that describe these periods as belonging to different genres nor does it name them differently.

This understanding of history suggests several questions: For what purposes did Israelite historians narrate the past? In what social settings was the past narrated? What do these conclusions suggest concerning using the Hebrew Bible for recovering the ancient Israelite past? How might a broadly comparative method help us answer these questions? What are the most important unanswered questions about biblical historical texts?

Why did Israelites Narrate the Past?

No direct evidence explains why Israelites told and wrote history. No ancient Near Eastern historical text, including the Hebrew Bible, contains introductions similar to those in Herodotus or Thucydides. Such Greek prefaces, though they might not be taken at face value, offer useful starting points. At the minimum, they identify and contextualize the authors as Herodotus of Halicarnassus and Thucydides the Athenian, living at particular times. The biblical historical texts, as ancient Near Eastern literature, are anonymous and do not have an explicit place or time setting. Therefore, biblical scholars ask about each text: What is the best explanation for why particular types of biblical "historical" texts were composed? Here, we employ analogies to types of history-writing whose origins are clearer to us (see, for example, Wood 2008). In outlining some answers to this question, I will be treating the Bible as a unit; a finer and more differentiated analysis would distinguish between different books and sources and would be more complete. Furthermore, it is important to remember that more than one factor is often responsible for the production of each text in its current form, and that "subtle distinctions among the genres of narratives about a past are more easily described than identified, for the edges between categories are fuzzy" (Noll 2008: 32).

Etiologies

Many biblical historical texts contain etiologies – ancient folk-explanations of origin for a wide variety of phenomena. Etiologies were isolated and studied especially with the rise of the form-critical methodology in biblical studies at the beginning of the twentieth century (see especially Gunkel 1994 [1910]; Wilcoxen 1974: 94–5). Many are explicit (on forms and classification, see Long 1968), that is, they contain phrases such as *'al ken*, "therefore," as in Genesis 11:9a: "Therefore (*'al ken*) it was called Babel, because there the LORD confounded (*balal*) the speech of the whole earth." This particular etiology contrasts with the Babylonians' own etymology for their city as *bāb ilī* – the gate of the god (Oates 1979: 60). Biblical etiologies often conflict with external or linguistic evidence, leading many to typify them as folk etymologies or *midrashic* (Garsiel 1991; Hess 1993).

The Israelite author did not compose the entire story in Genesis 11:1–9 on the basis of Babel/balal/confusion – this is one element that went into the composition

or shaping of the story. Sometimes, as in the naming of the city Beer-Sheba, in southern Judah, the Bible preserves double-etiologies, likely reflecting the conflation of traditions. The word *sheba/sheva* is homonymic, connected to "seven" and "taking an oath." Genesis 21:31 reads: "Therefore (*'al ken*) that place was called Beer-sheba, for there the two of them swore an oath (*nishbe'u*), connecting the name to oath taking (*shb'*)." The previous verses mention three times "seven (*shev'ah*) ewes." The name Beer-Sheba is thus the place of oath-taking (*shb'*), where the oath was formalized through seven (*sheva'*) ewes (Speiser 1964: 149).

The Bible contains many other types of etiologies or origin stories. It explains, for example, why snakes have no legs (Genesis 3) and the origin of smithing (4:22). It also narrates the origins of institutions. Just as the *Enuma Elish*, often misnamed "The Babylonian Creation Epic" (Hallo and Younger 1997: 390), is in part an explanation of why kingship is such a central institution in Mesopotamia – it goes back to the early days of the gods – the end of the first creation story in Genesis, at the beginning of Genesis 2, explains why the Sabbath is so important: like kingship in Mesopotamia, it is a divine institution eventually given to humans. Genesis 32:33 explains the origin of a food taboo. Genesis 11:1–9, the Tower of Babel Story, while describing the origin of the name Babylon, also offers an etiology for the development of different peoples with different languages. The previous chapter, dividing the descendants of Noah into the table of nations, accomplishes the same goal, but in a different way – through genealogies (see below). That chapter concludes (10:32): "These are the groupings of Noah's descendants, according to their origins, by their nations," suggesting, unlike the Tower story, that language diversity is a natural, and not a divinely ordained, process. Genesis 10:1–11:9 thus contains a conflicting double etiology.

Sometimes etiologies are not marked with phrases such as "therefore" – for example, the story in Genesis 19:26, that Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt, likely developed to explain an odd, human-like salt formation near Sodom (Westermann 1985: 307). The description of the Israelite conquest of Ai in Joshua 7–8 is problematic since that city was destroyed well before the period suggested in Joshua (Cooley 1997: 33). The story in Joshua may be related to the name's meaning ("heap") and was perhaps developed as an attempt to claim that ancient Israel turned the great city into a heap (Nelson 1997: 99). Although the term "etiology" and the study of etiologies have fallen out of fashion in biblical studies, etiologies of various types are frequent in biblical literature.[5]

Genealogies

Since Wilson's *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (1977), biblical scholars have come to realize that genealogies, which seem to tell only who is descended from whom, are often not reliable (Zadok 1998) because they serve a variety of purposes other than offering straightforward lists of descents (Hieke 2003; Levin 2004). Many biblical genealogies are etiological, explaining why or how various city-states are contiguous by positing or creating relationships between eponymous ancestors.

For example, after Sodom is destroyed at the end of Genesis 19, Lot, Abraham's nephew, is made drunk by his two daughters, who bear two children from him: Ammon and Moab. One function of this story is to explain how it happened that Ammon and Moab are Israel's immediate neighbors, east of the Jordan River. The story of incest probably also explains and justifies why the Israelites find the Ammonites and Moabites so revolting (Weisman 1992). Similar stories explain the relationship of Israel to the Arameans – Isaac's and Jacob's wives came from there, and Israel's connection to the Edomites, to their south, is explained by suggesting that Edom, namely Esau, was the brother of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. Thus, sections of these stories should really be read more as a map than as a biography.

Especially late in the biblical period, "real" genealogical records were kept for a variety of bureaucratic purposes, especially of priestly families – this is suggested, for instance, by Ezra 2:62: "they searched for their genealogical records, but they could not be found, so they were disqualified for the priesthood." Genealogies were probably also kept to assure proper land-inheritance (Barrick 2001: 54–5). But not all such genealogies are authentic. For example, some of the late genealogies found in the Bible, especially those in Chronicles (one of the later biblical books, from the fourth century) for the priest Zadok, are fabricated in an attempt to negotiate between conflicting concerns (Knoppers 2003b: 109–10, 127; Hunt 2006). At some point, the main priestly family was understood to comprise Zadok and his descendants; so a genealogy was composed (or falsified, created, invented) to connect Zadok to Aaron, who, according to some traditions, was supposed to be the father of all priests. Thus, genealogies could be fabricated for legitimation, another significant reason why biblical historical texts were written (see below).

History and Ideology

Many biblical historical texts were written for ideological or propagandistic purposes – in other words, these texts are political and/or religious persuasive literature (Brettler 1995: 13–14). The realms of politics and religion are typically not separate in the ancient Near East where some claim there was no "separation between 'church' and state. In ancient Israel, the major temples were state temples" (van der Toorn 2007: 85). Nevertheless, it is possible to discern texts that are significantly more interested in secular ideologies (politics) and religious ones (theology).

Ideological interests are most easily isolated (1) by comparing different texts that discuss the same topic, and (2) by examining the way in which certain texts highlight specific themes or (over)emphasize repeated ones. The use of these criteria reveals that much of the material concerning King Saul and David – kings whose existence remains unconfirmed in tenth-century non-Israelite documents – is ideological. These stories are told, by and large, in two biblical books: Samuel and Chronicles.

Chronicles, most likely written in the fourth century (Knoppers 2003a: 111–17), is later than Samuel, and may even reflect Davidic messianic tendencies (Kalimi 1990:

104–5); in any case, it was certainly written long after the demise of the Northern Kingdom, which competed against the Davidic kingdom until its destruction in circa 722. In composing his story of King David, the Chronicler (the author of Chronicles), who according to most scholars had a version of Samuel quite close to ours as his main source (for a minority contrary view, see Auld 1994), leaves out the entire Saul story as well as material that reflects poorly on David. For example, the Book of Samuel tells of David's affair with Bathsheba and its aftermath – it is actually possible to see how the Chronicler excised this (Knoppers 2004: 723–7). At the same time, the Chronicler composes material that idealizes David – adding that even though David could not build the Temple, he completed all the organization for the Temple and its cult, and handed the project over to his son, Solomon (1 Chronicles 22–29). Thus, by looking at the additions and subtractions of the Chronicler relative to Samuel (for example, Endres et al. 1998), it becomes clear that Chronicles was written, at least in part, to bolster the image of the house of David.

Even though we do not have the sources used to compose Samuel, the earlier book about David, and thus we cannot compare Samuel to its sources, it is still possible to discern its ideology, especially in the section that describes the transition from Saul, the first king of Israel according to the text, to David (Brettler 1995: 91–111). The text is organized in such a way that David, who is not related by blood to Saul, becomes Saul's son; some scholars even suggest that this was done because David really was a usurper and perhaps even killed King Saul (Halpern 2001: 78–81). It is clear from the current shape of some specific texts, as well as the manner in which texts were edited to tell a story, that Samuel in its current form is strongly interested in presenting David as the legitimate successor of Saul (Brettler 1995: 91–111). In two stories Saul calls David "my son" (1 Samuel 24:17; 26:17, 21, 25); David becomes Saul's son-in-law by Saul's initiative (in what begins with a plot to have David killed), and Jonathan, Saul's son and the crown-prince, gives David his clothing (1 Samuel 18:4), thus turning David into a symbolic Jonathan, the crown-prince and proper successor of Saul. To my mind, the best way to explain this recurring pattern of creating a pseudogenealogical relationship between Saul and David, and thereby legitimating David, is that the material was shaped by ideological concerns.

In addition to what might be called ideological shaping or editing, there is also clearly ideological composition. This is most obvious in one of the best-known biblical stories, concerning David and Goliath, in 1 Samuel 17. It is written in a late biblical dialect, is found in a much shorter form in the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Bible which was copied from a largely lost Hebrew text earlier than the one preserved in the Jewish community), and interrupts the flow between chapters 16 and 18 – in other words, there are overlapping good reasons to believe that it is a late insertion (van Seters 2009: 135–62). This text contains many folkloristic elements (Jason 1979; Dundes 1999: 67–69). Its main theme is how David (called *haqqatan* (v. 14), often translated "the youngest," but also meaning "the shortest") defeats the *giant* Goliath – while Saul, described twice elsewhere in Samuel as a full head taller than everyone in Israel (1 Samuel 9:2;

10:23), is nearly invisible and powerless in relation to a "real" giant. In other words, the Goliath story was constructed for ideological reasons, explaining, like other stories in the book, why Saul is disqualified as king, and David is supremely qualified to be his legitimate successor.

The story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 notes that (v. 7) "The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's bar," and says several times that Goliath taunts or defies (Hebrew *ḥrp*) Israel. These details were probably borrowed from an appendix at the end of 2 Samuel 21 (Brueggemann 1988):

> (19) There was another battle with the Philistines at Gob; and Elhanan son of Jaare-oregim from Bethlehem killed Goliath from Gat, whose spear had a shaft like a weaver's bar. (20) There was another battle at Gath – there was a giant of a man, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four all together! … (21) He taunted (*ḥrp*) Israel, so Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimei, killed him.

Stories often move from unknown characters to well-known heroes, and the presence of an uncommon verb (*ḥrp*) and the very rare Hebrew term for the "weaver's bar" (found only in these two texts) make it clear that the texts are related. Stories also often grow longer with time. These pieces of evidence make it likely that 1 Samuel 17, about David and Goliath, is an ideological reworking of (a text related to) 2 Samuel 21:19–21, written to make David look powerful, and qualified for kingship, as opposed to impotent Saul.

Many biblical passages are religious propaganda, participating in the ancient Near Eastern polemics of "my god is better than your god." The late stories in the first six chapters of Daniel certainly partake in this motif, where God saves righteous individuals from fiery furnaces (Daniel 3), a lions' den (6), and other attempts perpetrated by unbelieving heathens to murder pious Jews. These stories are not subtle – their message is stated explicitly and repeatedly, as in 4:34 where the following is put into the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's mouth: "So now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of Heaven, all of whose works are just and whose ways are just, and who is able to humble those who behave arrogantly" (Fewell 1991). Almost as unsubtle is the earlier story where YHWH, the Israelite God, afflicts Dagon, the Philistine deity, so that (1 Samuel 5:4) "Dagon was suddenly lying prone on the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD, with the head of Dagon and both hands cut off, lying on the threshold; only Dagon's trunk was left intact" (Miller and Roberts 1977). The confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18 has a similar theme and purpose.[6]

Prefiguration

Certain stories were written to prefigure events that would happen later. This is a way of expressing that particular later events are central to the culture's self-identity. Not surprisingly, this is especially common in Genesis (Brettler 1995: 48–61; for a

more theological approach see Ninow 2001), the Bible's first book, since the more ancient a phenomenon, the more significant it is. But it is not unique to Genesis. In Exodus 3, God appears to Moses in a burning bush at Mount Horeb, another name for Mount Sinai, where the Decalogue and other laws would later be given. Lost in the translation is that the Hebrew word is not the generic word for bush, but *seneh*, a very rare word, which puns assonantally on, and thus prefigures, Mt. Sinai (Meyers 2005: 52). The typological, prefiguring nature of this text is made explicit in 3:12b: "When you have freed the people from Egypt, you shall worship God at this very mountain." This is one of many cases where history is foretold. Exodus 3 thus highlights the centrality of the revelation at Sinai – the author cannot wait 16 chapters to tell of this "event." Historical traditions are sanctioned by being pretold.

The meaning of Torah (the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible) is "instruction" (Brettler 2004: 2), and many of its stories indeed aim primarily to *instruct*. In the stories about Jacob or Israel, the nation's eponymous ancestor is not a heroic figure, in contrast to some classical founder figures (though Josephus follows a Greek or Hellenistic model and transforms him and most other central figures into heroes; Feldman 1998). He is a trickster who tricks others and is then tricked himself (Fishbane 1979: 40–62; Niditch 1987: 93–126), thus offering an instructive example for future generations: if you trick others, you shall be tricked as well.

Instructive stories are also created to illustrate legal points. Numbers (15:32–36) narrates a story about a person who violates the Sabbath by collecting twigs or straw on that day and is ultimately put to death (Levine 1993: 398–99). This *is* a historical tradition in the sense that it is a narrative set in the past – and it illustrates and enlivens the Sabbath legislation repeated many times, for example, in Exodus 31:14–15:

> You shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you. The person who profanes it shall be put to death: whoever does work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his kin. Work may be done for six days, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does work on the sabbath day shall be put to death.

However, that story is not written to outline "facts" about the past, but to regulate norms for the author's present. Such instructive stories are not confined to the Torah, but are found throughout biblical historical texts.

The Performance of History

The exodus is performed in many ways in the Bible, a trend that will culminate after the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE, when the Seder rituals begin to develop (Bokser 1984). For example, according to Exodus 12:25–27,

upon entering the land of Israel, when your children ask, "what is this ritual?", you are supposed to answer that it re-presents God sparing Israel while smiting the Egyptians. According to the late text in Leviticus 23:43 (Knohl 1995: 36–40), Israelites must dwell in booths during the fall Sukkot festival "so that future generations would know that I made the Israelites dwell in booths when I took them out of the land of Egypt." It is striking, however, that a second event viewed as constitutive in the Torah – the giving of the law on Sinai – is never performed according to the Bible. In post-biblical Judaism, the festival of Shavuot/Pentecost has this role, but the many attempts to find a biblical annual covenant ceremony commemorating Sinai are not compelling.

In sum, outside of Passover, and the weekly Sabbath celebration, which according to some traditions (for example, Exodus 20:8–11; 31:12–17) is commemorated to mimic divine rest, the regular performance of history did not typify ancient Israel (for a contrasting view, see Roberts 2005). History is mentioned in several psalms, and is even the major subject of some psalms (such as Psalms 78, 105, 106, 135, 136), but none of these suggest a cultic reenactment of the perceived past. This tendency to reenact the past seems to become stronger in later biblical times, and especially in rabbinic tradition;[7] in other words, the tendency to reenact history became more predominant as Judaism developed.

History Legitimizing Institutions

Biblical "historical" traditions also play a strong role in legitimizing various places or other entities. Some sacred cities are sanctioned by patriarchal visits and building projects (for instance, Genesis 28:10–22, concerning Bethel); it remains perplexing that Jerusalem is not legitimized equally clearly (though see 14:18–20). Israelite control over the land of Israel is legitimized in a variety of places, including Genesis 22:16b–17, where an angel states to Abraham at the conclusion of the story of the binding of Isaac:

> Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one, I will most certainly bestow My blessings upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand on the seashore, and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes.

The existence of the Northern Kingdom after King Solomon is legitimized by noting Solomon's sins in 1 Kings (Brettler 1991). The festival of Purim is legitimized in the scroll of Esther (Berlin 2001: xlv–xlix). That the Bible contains many cases where history has a legitimizing function is only to be expected, since legitimizing the present was a major reason why premodern history was written (Brettler 1995: 96–97; Johnson 2004).

Polemical History

History could be written to polemicize against views held by other groups. Many biblical texts are written by Judeans concerning the Northern Kingdom, and purposely denigrate its kings and people. They are depicted as illegitimate usurpers, who "tore away from the house of David" (2 Kings 17:21; see Brettler 1995: 124–25). Their dynasties are depicted as very unstable (for example, in 1 Kings 16:15–21), and major accomplishments of some of their kings, about which we know from non-Israelite sources, are passed over in silence (Grabbe 2007: xx). 2 Kings 17 justifies the exile of the Northern people by depicting them in near-monstrous terms (Brettler 1995: 112–34).

Texts were also written to denigrate competing religious practices. Judges 17–18 depicts the origin of Northern religion as sacrilegious (Brettler 1989: 409–10), and 1 Kings 12:33 explicitly speaks of Jeroboam, the first Northern king, as making up religious customs.

Sometimes texts are preserved that reflect both sides of a religious polemic. For example, the book of Ezra vehemently condemns intermarriage, quite idiosyncratically from the Bible's perspective, because "the holy seed has become intermixed with the peoples of the land" (9:2).[8] Many scholars see the idyllic book of Ruth, set (fictitiously) in the so-called period of Judges, as a polemic written in the period of Ezra to counterbalance Ezra's view (LaCocque 2004: 18–21). In so doing, Ruth created a story that illustrated that *ḥesed* (often translated as "loving-kindness") is more important that lineage, and that Israel may, indeed should, incorporate foreigners (ibid. 151–54). Since both opposing views have been preserved, it is easy to determine the polemical aspect of these texts. The polemical nature of other texts is less obvious because the Bible has not preserved both sides of the polemic.

History as Entertainment

Sections of the Bible are humorous and entertaining (Whedbee 2002). Humor, especially at the expense of Israel's enemies, is a central characteristic of parts of the book of Judges (Brettler 1995: 79–90). It is also easy to imagine, for example, the ancient audience chuckling while it heard the story about Lot's daughters getting him drunk and having sex with him, resulting in the birth of two children (Genesis 19:30–38), including Moab (Hebrew *mo'av*), etymologized in this story as *me-av* ("from daddy"), a reference to the incest. The Moabite "Bible" etymologized Moab's name differently (Miller 1992: 882).

The Book of Jonah is highly didactic (Limburg 1993: 22–8) and may have been stylized to teach serious lessons. It depicts in a highly structured fashion a prophet named Jonah or "dove" who is sent to Nineveh, whose meaning and cuneiform sign is a fish; he is swallowed by a big fish on the way, and at the end has a temper tantrum over some sort of withering gourd tree. The book

continues its animal theme, ending with the words "and many domesticated animals." The story is constructed to hold the audience's attention but also intended to edify, to instruct while it amuses; it is "a profound joke" (Whedbee 2002: 216; see 191–220). After all, it is unlikely that dry didactic stories would be preserved.

Antiquarian Interest and Historical Consciousness

There are still other reasons why particular types of biblical historical texts were composed, but it is unlikely that they were composed and preserved for their own sake, for antiquarian interest (contrast Halpern 1988). On the basis of comparative evidence concerning premodern history, most if not all ancient historians were much more interested in their present than in the real past (Brettler 1995: 96–99) – this is the opposite of antiquarian interest. The Bible may incorporate sources, and may even use what we might call archival material from the Temple and royal palace (Brettler 2007: 315–22). It claims to quote older material, such as the Book of Yashar (Schniedewind 2004: 53), and thirty-three times the Book of Kings cites annals of Judah or Israel – but it cites these works to generate authority, not from antiquarian interest.

Antiquarian interest, however, should be differentiated from "historical consciousness." Historical consciousness is related to connecting the constructed past to the real present (Lukacs 1997). The frequent use of the phrase "until this day" suggests such an interest (Geoghegan 2006), as does the comment in Judges 6:13:

> Gideon said to him [an angel], "Please, my lord, Is the LORD really with us? Then why has all this befallen us? Where are all His wondrous deeds about which our ancestors told us, saying, 'Isn't it so that the LORD brought us up from Egypt'? But now the LORD has abandoned us and delivered us into the hands of Midian!"

This texts shows an understanding that the (narrative) past may differ from the (narrative) present. Many other texts of different types connect past "events" and present realities (e.g., Psalm 83:10–13 [English 9–12]), while other texts, such as Psalm 78:6–8, show an interest in perpetuating the past and present for the future,

> so that a future generation might know – children yet to be born – and in turn will tell their children so that they might put their confidence in God, and not forget God's great deeds, but observe His commandments, and not be like their ancestors, a wayward and defiant generation, a generation whose heart was inconstant, whose spirit was not true to God.

Historical consciousness definitely is not the same as antiquarian interest.

The Social Setting of Israelite History

Understanding *why* stories were composed and told raises the related question of *where* these stories were told – namely, what are the social settings for telling history in ancient Israel? There is clear evidence that stories were told in the royal court and in the cult. We have a number of psalms which some scholars classify as "historical psalms" (Seybold 1990:118), Deuteronomy 26:1–11 offers a "short historical creed" that needs to be recited when bringing the first-fruits to Jerusalem (Nelson 2002: 306–10), and texts such as Joshua 24, which also contains a historical reprise, may suggest the retelling of history in a(n annual?) cultic rite (Nelson 1997: 265–66), which cannot be reconstructed with much confidence.

History was also told in royal settings. The Bible mentions two officials, a royal *mazkir* (often rendered "recorder") and a royal *sofer* ("scribe") who may have had official court roles in composing and telling history. Their exact role continues to be debated (Fox 2000: 96–121). 1 Kings 10, where the Queen of Sheba hears about Solomon's adventures, likely reflects the idea that Israelite kings could receive information about faraway kings (see similarly 2 Kings 2:5).

Many texts suggest that stories were also told in family settings. Exodus 10:2, from the plague narrative, notes explicitly: "and so you may tell in the hearing of your children and of your children's children how I made a mockery of Egypt and of My signs that I displayed among them – in order that you may know that I am the LORD." Psalm 78:3 speaks of historical stories that "our parents told us" (see also 44:2). Tales of natural disasters would also be passed down in a family from generation to generation (Joel 1:3, of a locust plague).

We also know that at some point(s), women composed battle accounts to regale the returning warriors (Meyers 2000). The deceased were lamented, but it is unclear how much personal information was conveyed in these laments (contrast 2 Samuel 2:17–27 and Jeremiah 34:5 with Ezekiel 26–28). "Guild stories" were told within particular groups – we have evidence that men of God and those close to the movement associated with Elijah and Elisha were interested in hearing stories about the marvels of their leaders, past and present (see especially 1 Kings 13:11 and 2 Kings 8:4; Rofé 1988: esp. 41–51). Judges 14:13 suggests that riddles were told at wedding parties; perhaps stories were told there too, and at other types of gatherings.

Determining social setting is very important since particular settings influence the shaping and content of stories in a variety of ways: "[a]s stories shift synchronically from one social setting to another or diachronically from one set of social conditions to a succeeding one, actors, events, and explanations may also shift" (Parker 1997: 136–7). Some biblical stories appear in duplicate or triplicate, in different form – the significant changes between versions probably reflect, in part, different social settings (Childs 1967; Koch 1969: 111–48).

Reconstructing the Ancient Israelite Past

The title of a recent article, "Conjuring History from Texts" (Tomes 2007), aptly captures the difficulty of using biblical texts to recreate the past, as does the important 1997 collection of essays which initiated the European Seminar in Historical Methodology: *Can a 'History of Israel' Be Written?* (Grabbe 1997). As noted earlier, our preserved texts are typically centuries later than the events they depict, and they are very heavily edited. Often we do not know in what circles particular parts of them developed and how, and under whose influence, they were changed and changed again. There are cases where biblical accounts are likely accurate, and may even suggest that we can reconstruct reliable sources within the biblical text (Grabbe 2007: 212–13; Brettler 2007), but in many other cases external sources indicate that the Bible got it wrong (Grabbe 2007: 214–15).

Biblical historical texts look nothing like the small number of "real," excavated historical documents:

> The rarity of material in the Deuteronomomistic History [= Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings] that is at all close in form or style or narrative technique to the stories preserved in the one virtually intact royal inscription from southern Syria–Palestine or the fragments from Tel Dan argues against the supposition that the Judean historians in general quoted extensively from – or indeed were significantly influenced by – campaign narratives preserved in Israelite or Judean royal inscriptions. (Parker 1997: 75)

Furthermore, "the retelling of stories involves their reinterpretation" (ibid. 9), as can be seen in a recent close study of the book of Esther (Dalley 2007). To complicate issues further, "[a]longside transcription, invention is a primary source of biblical texts" including historiography (van der Toorn 2007: 118). It is very difficult to know which texts have been invented – they may aim at verisimilitude and thus look the same as those that may have been transcribed. Furthermore, given that many believe that oral traditions transmitted over more than one hundred and fifty years are useless for reconstructing the events that these traditions portray (Kirkpatrick 1988: 101–12), and that long periods of oral transmission must stand behind many biblical stories, it is especially difficult to use most biblical traditions to uncover the history they depict.

This idea, that biblical history was invented or created, does not single out ancient Israel in a detrimental fashion. In the introduction to *The Invention of Sacred Tradition*, a work whose title mirrors the famous collection edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), the editors note; "From the early records of Israelite or Zoroastrian religion to the present-day Scientologists and Pagans, the invention of sacred tradition is … a persistent and ubiquitous phenomenon" (Lewis and Hammer 2007: 16). Nor is this tendency unique to religious traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Kohl et al. 2007).

The problem of using the Bible as a source is subject to all the problems of other historical writing that I have noted, as well as some that I have not concentrated on here, such as the problem of the "narrative turn" (Czarniawska 2004: 1–16; Megill 2007: 63–106). It is especially hampered, as I pointed out in my introduction, by the great distance between event and final shape that "is particularly great when it comes to folktales" (van der Toorn 2007: 114), which include much of Genesis, Judges, and the prophetic stories. Though there are some exceptions (on which see, for example, Niditch 2008), in general biblical scholars, myself included, have been too literary in the models we have used, and have not integrated sufficiently models from folkloristics to understand how and why stories take their current shape.

"Memory" to the Rescue?

Philip Davies of Sheffield recently published *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History – Ancient and Modern* (2008). Like other works, such as *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Hendel 2005), he replaces the category of "history" with that of "memory," and even has a section called "The Bible as Judean Cultural Memory" (111–15). This laudable approach, found in some segments of general history as well (see Lowenthal 1985; Megill 2007: 17–40), offers the ancient biblical texts a positive label, rather than implying that they are failed modern histories. It also suggests that the Bible can be an important source for "real history" – the real ideological and theological history of the editors responsible for the final product. Yet this recategorization does little to resolve the many unanswered questions about the nature of biblical texts, nor is it helpful in recovering the history of early Israel.

For Further Thought, Especially in a Comparative Context

Many of the previous observations highlight how much we do not know about how, why, and where biblical historical texts were written. Much of this lack of clarity derives from uncertainties concerning the historical reconstruction of ancient Israel and especially the question of when a developed state emerged. Through most of the twentieth century, the biblical picture of a highly developed state in the early tenth century BCE, under David and Solomon, was taken for granted, and the beginning of significant writing was attributed to that period (Scott 1955; Lemaire 1995). Given, on the one side, the importance of history writing elsewhere in the ancient Near East (although see Michalowski, this vol.) and, on the other, Israel's geographical location and frequent condition as a vassal of imperial powers, it was assumed, quite reasonably, that history writing must have developed at that time in Israel as well. The last two decades, however, have seen a sea change in the reconstruction of ancient Israel

(Grabbe 2007), and serious doubt has been cast on the existence of a centralized state with the structures necessary to produce history, and of sufficiently high literacy rates until two or three centuries later (ibid. 115–18).[9] Given the current lack of consensus on these key issues, general observations concerning literacy, state development, and bureaucracy are of little help for understanding the development of different types of history in ancient Israel.

For these reasons, the type of comparative evidence collected in the present volume is especially important. It may offer valuable insights when we approach the following questions:

First, what types of time and what experiences prompt the writing of history? In the last volume of his trilogy on historiography, Donald Kelley says (2006: 245–6): "History is a luxury of settled and organized people, while migrating and diasporic groups find it difficult to establish their roots or 'invent' their nationalities." This statement, if true, would have important implications for how far back the historical traditions of ancient Israel could reach, and would suggest that all of early history of Israel is significantly later than the period it purports to narrate, a conclusion that many biblical scholars have reached on other grounds.

Others have suggested that history is written as a reaction to profound experiences or contingencies, such as great wars (Meier 1987; Boedeker 1998). To what extent does the biblical material bear out this hypothesis, and if so, in reaction to which catastrophic events was history written at various times? Furthermore, if the major catastrophe was the Babylonian exile, which seems to have engendered significant writing, including historical writing (Albertz 2003), when is history written after a tragedy, and when is it written in times of stability, as suggested by Kelley, and how do those two different types of times shape history differently? Or was history written primarily during times of social, political, or religious upheaval, as suggested by the studies of James Fitzgerald in this volume and elsewhere? Or are there perhaps many possible answers to when and why history is written?

Second, how did the ancient Israelites understand their texts about the past – more specifically, could they understand certain historical texts both literally and nonliterally? For example, did the readers of Exodus 3 think that Moses had a revelation at a burning *seneh and* that Israel had a revelation at a burning mountain, *or* did the readers of Exodus 3 think: "This is a story only, prefiguring what will happen later, and no such experience happened to Moses?" Similarly, were clearly typological stories also meant to be understood literally? Should we apply the title and some of the insights of Paul Veyne's *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* (1988) to what I would call biblical historical myths? As moderns, we typically believe that a statement or story is either literal or figurative, but was the premodern world as dichotomous? Perhaps for biblical Israelites, there was no binary opposition between "literal" and "figurative," and these two categories formed a false dichotomy. Since the 1970s, scholars, especially feminist scholars, have insisted on a "both/and" way of looking at the world – perhaps this describes as well how ancient Israelites understood some traditions that depicted a past.

Similarly, what do we do with historical texts that combine features that I believe ancient readers would have found fanciful *and* features that I think ancient readers would have found real? For example, the Book of Ruth has various names suggesting that it should be read symbolically, including those of two characters who die: Machlon and Chilion (sickness and cessation; Sasson 1989: 18–19). Yet it ends with a genealogy that culminates with King David, whom, I believe, the author considered a real person. Did ancient readers understand the same work simultaneously as symbolic and real – and if so, how? Here too, do our modern dichotomies fail us as we try to understand these biblical texts – and if so, what types of works may be helpful for entering the ancient minds as they heard these biblical stories?

Third, I have suggested that the study of folklore can be helpful for understanding many aspects of biblical historical texts. This path was pursued in the early days of folklore studies (Kirkpatrick 1988) but it has largely been abandoned. How should methods of folklore studies be used to understand biblical historical *texts*, which in many cases originated with "the folk" but in their current form reflect writings transmitted and changed over generations by various elites? Have biblical scholars missed the boat by focusing on the traditional "-isms" of biblical scholarship, such as source-criticism, form-criticism, redaction-criticism, etc. (see, for instance the handbook of Steck 1995), but ignoring folklore-criticism?

Fourth, the study of biblical texts is subject to pendulum swings, with scholars in some periods suggesting that the Bible is typical of the ancient Near East and those in others highlighting its uniqueness (Greenspahn 1991). How might we categorize and quantify the purpose and nature of (premodern) history in general, and especially across the cultures, so that we could develop a clear sense of how different the Bible really is, if at all? This would necessitate another round of discussions such as those that helped shape the present volume, which would benefit all involved by helping to establish further the broad field of comparative historiography – while up to now the study of historiography has far too often been confined to the Greco-Roman world and its descendants (Banks 2006: 1).[10]

Notes

1 Though dated, the best comparative treatment is van Seters 1983.
2 Approaches to the Bible are as varied as biblical scholars; see my approach in Brettler 2005.
3 It is likely that most of the authors of the texts in the Bible are male, and they certainly reflect male perspectives; see Brenner and van Dijk-Hemmes 1996. A possible exception is Ruth; see ibid. and Brenner 1993: 116–44.
4 The exact nature of the Hebrew tense or mood system continues to be debated (see Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 455–95), but this is not relevant for the issue at hand.
5 Van Dyk 1990; some exceptions include Hoffman 1996.
6 Related to this notion that my God is better than your god are the many cases in the Hebrew Bible where an ancient story from another civilization has been taken over and "Israelitized," as in the flood story and Gilgamesh XI.

7   In the rabbinic period, all the major festivals, including Shavuot, are historicized.
    In addition, in the liturgy for Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), the service con-
    nected to the high priest entering the holy of holies is partially reenacted by the cantor
    and congregation.
8   On biblical attitudes toward intermarriage, see Cohen 1999; Hayes 2002: 19–67.
9   A small number of scholars, including Mazar 2009, are returning to the older position
    with the highly controversial suggestion that David's palace has been discovered.
10 This chapter was last revised in July 2011.

References

Albertz, R. 2003. *Israel in Exile*. Atlanta.

Albrektson, B. 1967. *History and the Gods*. Lund.

Amit, Y. 1987. "The Dual Causality Principle and its Effects on Biblical Literature."
    Vetus Testamentum 37: 385–400.

Auld, A.G. 1994. *Kings Without Privilege*. Edinburgh.

Banks, D. 2006. *Writing the History of Israel*. New York.

Bar-Ilan. M. 1992. "Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries C.E." In S. Fishbane
    and S. Schoenfeld (eds.), *Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society*,
    II: 46–61. Hoboken, NJ and Montréal.

Barrick, W.B. 2001. "Genealogical Notes on the 'House of David' and the 'House of
    Zadok'." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 96: 29–58.

Berlin, A. 2001. *Esther*. Philadelphia.

Boedeker, D. 1998. "Presenting the Past in Fifth-Century Athens." In D. Boedeker and
    K. Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, 185–202.
    Cambridge, MA.

Bokser, B.M. 1984. *Origins of the Seder*. Berkeley.

Brenner, A. 1993. *A Feminist Companion to Ruth*. Sheffield.

Brenner, A., and F. van Dijk-Hemmes. 1996. *On Gendering Texts*. Leiden.

Brettler, M.Z. 1989. "The Book of Judges." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108: 395–418.

Brettler, M.Z. 1991. "The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11." *Journal for the Study of the Old
    Testament* 49: 87–97.

Brettler, M.Z. 1995. *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel*. London.

Brettler, M.Z. 2004. "Torah." In A. Berlin and M. Brettler (eds.), *The Jewish Study Bible*,
    1–7. New York.

Brettler, M.Z. 2005. *How to Read the Bible*. Philadelphia.

Brettler, M.Z. 2007. "Method in the Application of Biblical Source Material to Historical
    Writing." In H.G.M. Williamson (ed.), *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel*, 305–36.
    Oxford.

Brooke, G.J., and T. Römer (eds.). 2007. *Ancient and Modern Scriptural Historiography*. Leuven.

Brueggemann, W. 1988. "2 Samuel 21–24." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50: 383–97.

Carr, D.M. 2005. *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*. New York.

Childs, B.S. 1967. *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*. London.

Cogan, M. 2005. "Some Text-Critical Issues in the Hebrew Bible from an Assyriological
    Perspective." *Textus* 22: 1–20.

Cohen, S.J.D. 1999. *The Beginnings of Jewishness*. Berkeley.

Cooley, R.E. 1997. "Ai." In E.M. Meyers (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, I: 32–33. New York.

Csapo, E. 2005. *Theories of Mythology*. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Czarniawska, B. 2004. *Narratives in Social Science Research*. Newbury Park.

Dalley, S. 2007. *Esther's Revenge at Susa*. Oxford.

Davies, P.R. 2008. *Memories of Ancient Israel*. Louisville.

Dundes, A. 1999. *Holy Writ as Oral Lit*. Lanham, MD.

Endres, J.C., W.R. Millar, and J.B. Burns (eds.). 1998. *Chronicles and Its Synoptic Parallels in Samuel, Kings, and Related Biblical Texts*. Collegeville.

Feldman, L.H. 1998. *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*. Leiden.

Fewell, D.N. 1991. *Circle of Sovereignty*. Nashville.

Finnegan, R. 2007. *The Oral and Beyond*. Chicago.

Fishbane, M. 1979. *Text and Texture*. New York.

Fox, N.S. 2000. *In the Service of the King*. Cincinnati.

Gaddis, J.L. 2002. *The Landscape of History*. New York.

Garbini, G. 2003. *Myth and History in the Bible*. London.

Garsiel, M. 1991. *Biblical Names*. Ramat Gan.

Geoghegan, J.C. 2006. *The Time, Place, and Purpose of the Deuteronomistic History*. Atlanta.

Goody, J. 1977. *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge.

Grabbe, L.L. (ed.). 1997. *Can a "History of Israel" Be Written?* Sheffield.

Grabbe, L.L. 2007. *Ancient Israel*. London.

Greenspahn, F.E. 1991. *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*. New York.

Gunkel, H. 1994 [1910]. *The Stories of Genesis*. Vallejo.

Hallo, W.W., and K.L. Younger (eds.). 1997–2002. *The Context of Scripture*. 3 vols. Leiden.

Halpern, B. 1988. *The First Historians*. San Francisco.

Halpern, B. 2001. *David's Secret Demons*. Grand Rapids.

Hayes, C.E. 2002. *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*. New York.

Hendel, R. 2005. *Remembering Abraham*. New York.

Hess, R.S. 1993. *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1–11*. Kevelaer.

Hess, R.S. 2006. "Writing about Writing: Abecedaries and Evidence for Literacy in Ancient Israel." *Vetus Testamentum* 56: 342–46.

Hezser, C. 2001. *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*. Tübingen.

Hieke, T. 2003. *Die Genealogien der Genesis*. Freiburg.

Hobsbawm, E., and T. Ranger (eds.). 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge.

Hoffman, Y. 1996. "Aetiology, Redaction, and Historicity in Jeremiah xxxvi." *Vetus Testamentum* 46: 179–89.

Hunt, A. 2006. *Missing Priests*. New York.

Jason, H. 1979. "The Story of David and Goliath." *Biblica* 60: 36–70.

Johnson, S.R. 2004. *Historical Fictions and Hellenistic Jewish Identity*. Berkeley.

Kalimi, I. 1990. *Chronicles*. Jerusalem.

Kelley, D.R. 2006. *Frontiers of History*. New Haven.

Kirkpatrick, P.G. 1988. *The Old Testament and Folklore Study*. Sheffield.

Knohl, I. 1995. *The Sanctuary of Silence*. Minneapolis.

Knoppers, G. 2003a. *I Chronicles 1–9*. New York.

Knoppers, G. 2003b. "The Relationship of the Priestly Genealogies to the History of the High Priesthood in Jerusalem." In O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, 109–33. Winona Lake.

Knoppers, G. 2004. *I Chronicles 10–29*. New York.

Koch, K. 1969. *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition*. London.

Kohl, P.L., M. Kozelsky, and N. Ben-Yehuda (eds.). 2007. *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts*. Chicago.

LaCocque, A. 2004. *Ruth: A Continental Commentary*. Trans. J.C. Hanson. Minneapolis.

Lemaire, A. 1995. "Wisdom in Solomonic Historiography." In J. Day, R.P. Gordon, and H.G.M. Williamson (eds.), *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, 106–18. Cambridge.

Levin, Y. 2004. "From Lists to History." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123: 601–36.

Levine, B. 1993. *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York.

Levine, L.D. 1981. "Manuscripts, Texts and the Study of the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions." In F.M. Fales (ed.), *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New Horizons*, 49–70. Rome.

Lewis, J.R., and O. Hammer. 2007. *The Invention of Sacred Tradition*. Cambridge.

Limburg, J. 1993. *Jonah*. Louisville.

Long, B. 1968. *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament*. Berlin.

Lowenthal, D. 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge.

Lukacs, J. 1997. *Historical Consciousness*. New Brunswick.

Mazar, E. 2009. *The Palace of King David* (Hebrew). Jerusalem.

Megill, A. 2007. *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error*. Chicago.

Meier, C. 1987. "Historical Answers to Historical Questions: The Origins of History in Ancient Greece." In D. Boedeker (ed.), *Herodotus and the Invention of History. Arethusa* 20: 41–58.

Meyers, C.L. 2000. "Women with Hand-Drums, Dancing." In Meyers (ed.), *Women in Scripture*, 189–91. Boston.

Meyers, C.L. 2005. *Exodus*. Cambridge.

Miller, J.M. 1992. "Moab." In *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, IV: 882–93. New York.

Miller, P.D., and J.J.M. Roberts. 1977. *The Hand of the Lord*. Baltimore.

Nelson, R.D. 1997. *Joshua: A Commentary*. Louisville.

Nelson, R.D. 2002. *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*. Louisville.

Niditch. S. 1987. *Underdogs and Tricksters: A Prelude to Biblical Folklore*. San Francisco.

Niditch. S. 1996. *Oral World and Written Word*. Louisville.

Niditch. S. 2008. *Judges: A Commentary*. Louisville.

Ninow, F. 2001. *Indicators of Typology within the Old Testament: The Exodus Motif*. Frankfurt.

Noll, K.L. 2008. "The Evolution of Genre in the Book of Kings." In P.G. Kirkpatrick and T.D. Goltz (eds.), *The Function of Ancient Historiography in Biblical and Cognate Studies*, 29–56. Edinburgh.

Oates, J. 1979. *Babylon*. London.

Pardee, D. 1982. *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters*. Chico, CA.

Parker, S.B. 1997. *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions*. New York.

Pritchard, J. 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd edn. Princeton.

Roberts, J.J.M. 2005. "Mowinckel's Enthronement Festival: A Review." In P.W. Flint and P.D. Miller, Jr. (eds.), *The Book of Psalms*, 97–115. Leiden.

Rofé, A. 1988. *The Prophetical Stories*. Jerusalem.

Römer, T. 2005. *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*. London.

Russel, J.M. 1991. *Sennacherib's Palace Without Rival at Nineveh*. Chicago.

Russel, J.M. 1999. *The Writing on the Wall*. Winona Lake.

Sasson, J.M. 1989. *Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation*. Sheffield.

Schniedewind, W.M. 2004. *How the Bible Became a Book*. Cambridge.

Scholes, R. 1981. "Afterthoughts." In W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *On Narrative*, 200–8. Chicago.

Scott, R.B.Y. 1955. "Solomon and the Beginnings of Wisdom in Israel." *Vetus Testamentum* Supp. 3: 262–79.

Seybold, K. 1990. *Introducing the Psalms*. Edinburgh.

Speiser, E. A. 1964. *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. New York.

Steck, O.H. 1995. *Old Testament Exegesis*. Atlanta.

Tappy, R.E., and P.K. McCarter, Jr. 2008. *Literate Culture and Tenth Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context*. Winona Lake.

Tomes, R. 2007. "Conjuring History from Texts" In Brooke and Römer 2007: 47–59.

van der Toorn, K. 2007. *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. Cambridge, MA.

van Dyk, P.J. 1990. "The Function of So-Called Etiological Elements in Narratives." *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Literatur* 102: 19–33.

van Seters, J. 1983. *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*. New Haven.

van Seters, J. 2006. *The Edited Bible*. Winona Lake.

van Seters, J. 2009. *The Biblical Saga of King David*. Winona Lake.

Veyne, P. 1988. *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* Chicago.

Waltke, B., and M. O'Connor. 1990. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake.

Weisman, Z. 1992. "Ethnology, Etiology, Genealogy, and Historiography in the Tale of Lot and his Daughters (Genesis 19:30–38)." In M. Fishbane and E. Tov (eds.), *Sha'arei Talmon*, 43*–52* *(Hebrew)*. Winona Lake.

Wesselius, J.-W. 2002. *The Origins of the History of Israel*. Sheffield.

Westermann, C. 1985. *Genesis 12–36: A Commentary*. Trans. J.J. Scullion. Minneapolis.

Whedbee, J.W. 2002. *The Bible and the Comic Vision*. Minneapolis.

Wilcoxen, J.A. 1974. "Narrative." In J.H. Hayes (ed.), *Old Testament Form Criticism*, 57–98. San Antonio.

Wilson, R.R. 1977. *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World*. New Haven.

Wood, G.S. 2008. *The Purpose of the Past*. New York.

Young, I. 2005. "Israelite Literacy and Inscriptions: A Response to Richard Hess." *Vetus Testamentum* 55: 565–68.

Zadok, R. 1998. "On the Reliability of the Genealogical and Prosopographical Lists of the Israelites in the Old Testament." *Tel-Aviv* 25: 228–54.

12

The Many Faces of the Past in Archaic and Classical Greece

Jonas Grethlein

In his *Panegyric*, a speech dating from 380,[1] the Athenian orator Isocrates points out that no account has done justice to the deeds of the Greeks in the Persian Wars (4.82, trans. Norlin 1966):

> So they produced in the persons of those who fought against the men from Asia men of such great valour that no one, either of the poets or of the sophists, has ever been able to speak in a manner worthy of their achievements.

It is striking whom Isocrates mentions as recorders of the Persian Wars. While we, for sure, would first think of Herodotus and his *Histories*, Isocrates names poets and sophists. It cannot be ruled out that Herodotus may be subsumed under the category of "sophists," but the word primarily signifies orators such as Isocrates himself. Obviously, Isocrates considered poetic and rhetorical presentations of the past more prominent than historiographical accounts to which *we* would turn in the first place. In modern scholarship, the Greek historians have received much attention not only for their own sake, but also as predecessors of modern historiography. The privileging of historiography, together with a penchant for teleological models, has made it easy for modern scholars to disregard other forms of memory or to view them as deficient forerunners that would yield to Herodotus's glorious discovery and finally to the peaks of Thucydides' methodologically explicit account.[2]

However, Isocrates' statement reminds us not only that there were commemorative genres before historiography, but also that after the latter's rise in the fifth century, far from replacing poetic and rhetorical accounts of the past, history was one commemorative genre among others and, perhaps, not even the most influential. In order to understand Greek historical thinking more fully, it is necessary to take into account other literary genres and media as well. The past in archaic and classical Greece had many faces. In this chapter, I will look at oral traditions (I), poetry (II), oratory (III), and art (IV), examine their scope as well as their idea of history, and try to relate the findings to narrative forms and contexts of performance and reception, thereby teasing out differences and charting the gravitational field of memory in archaic and classical Greece (circa 800–300). This survey of nonhistoriographical memory, which will necessarily be superficial and, so to speak, linger on the cosmetics of Klio, will be the basis upon which I shall suggest a new assessment of the rise of Greek historiography (V).[3]

I   Oral Traditions

In a wider sense, much of the material discussed in this section could be labeled "oral tradition." Writing was introduced at the beginning of the Archaic age around 800, but until the fourth century oral performances were the primary means of disseminating poetry as well as oratory.[4] As important as I find it to heed the prominence of orality in ancient Greece, I will challenge the widespread idea that central features of memory in ancient Greece can be solely attributed to its mediality. For one, the neglect of chronology may not only be due to a lack of written sources, but also express a specific idea of history (Grethlein 2006a: 108–11).

In a narrower sense, I would like to apply the term "oral traditions" to tales and legends about the past that were handed down orally from generation to generation without having a metrical form (Thomas 1989). Needless to say, it is impossible for the scholar of any extinct culture to grasp such traditions directly. At the same time, their traces in Greek historiography and oratory testify to their importance. Herodotus frequently refers to local stories he has heard,[5] Thucydides harshly criticizes his contemporaries for their uncritical belief in hearsay (1.20.1; 6.53.3), and many of the references to the past in fourth-century oratory are obviously based on orally transmitted knowledge.

It is likely that families, particularly among the aristocracy, played a major role in the transmission of oral traditions, for the past offered precious capital in their fight for social distinction.[6] Accordingly, such traditions were tainted by bias and open to changes required by different contexts. It seems that for legitimizing purposes of Greek aristocrats, heroic ancestry was of particular importance.[7] As in oral traditions of other cultures, we can observe a telescoping effect that links mythical time directly to recent events which go back only few generations and move with each generation (Thomas 1989: 155–95).

II   Poetry

II.1   *Epic*

An important source for claims to heroic ancestry was Homeric epic, which had a seminal influence on Greek culture in general. It is hard nowadays to find scholars who believe or, at least, dare to argue publicly that Homer provides us with reliable data about a historical siege of Troy and the arduous return of a hero named Odysseus.[8] The Greeks, on the other hand, did not doubt that Agamemnon, Achilles, and Helen had existed, and even Thucydides, hailed as the father of critical historiography, used the numbers in the Homeric "Catalogue of Ships" to make conjectures about the size of the Greek expedition (1.10.4). Together with several other epics of which only fragments have been preserved, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were open to criticism for poetic exaggerations but were nonetheless viewed as records of the archaic past. For the Greeks, myth was not so much opposed to history as forming their ancient past (Veyne 1983; Calame 1996).

Neither *Iliad* nor *Odyssey*, both products of oral traditions in the Archaic Age,[9] allow us to date the events they narrate in relation to the epic present. References to this present are few and vague, as when the narrator states that the heroes lifted stones which nowadays men cannot move (*Il.* 5.302–4; 12.381–83; 12.445–49; 20.285–87). And yet, while the temporal distance remains undefined, this comparison indicates that the standards of the heroic time were significantly greater than those of the narrator's present. Thus, although the epics do not describe the development from the heroic past to the present, history is obviously seen as involving a decline.[10] The larger-than-life frame of the heroic world allowed the Greeks to use the epics as an archive for *exempla a maiore ad minus* (parallels between the larger, more eminent, and the lesser cases: Grethlein 2010a: 55–57 with examples).[11] Such an exemplary use of the epic past – of which we will encounter several instances in the following sections – establishes a link between past and present without paying attention to the sequence of events that led from the past to the present. Such disregard for the exact chronological relation between past and present is nicely illustrated by an *exemplum* within the *Iliad* when Phoenix places Meleager in the age of *palai* ("in ancient times," *Il.* 9.527), although he was a contemporary of the heroes' fathers (Grethlein 2006a: 56).

If we turn to the epic idea of history, the way in which human existence in time is envisaged, the prominence of contingency is striking. The plans of the heroes are frequently crossed by factors that are beyond their power, and in a war epic the consequences tend to be adverse and even, more often than not, lethal. The fragility of human life comes to the fore in "mishits," a type-scene in which a hero aims at an opponent whom he misses while hitting and often killing another (Grethlein 2006a: 160). The *condicio heroica*, one could say, is an exacerbated version of the *condicio humana*. Unlike in the Judeo-Christian tradition, contingency is not resolved by a god who pursues a plan and thereby endows history with direction

and meaning; rather, since the decisions of the Olympian gods are more or less arbitrary, the so-called "Götterapparat" ("divine apparatus") only has the effect of transferring contingency to a higher level and ultimately increasing its force.

The grip of contingency on the heroes is underscored by the narrative form of the epic.[12] Scholars have been baffled by the temporal complexity of the Homeric narrative which is full of anachronisms, leaps to the past or future of narrated time. In focusing on the "content of the form," I suggest reading narrative time in epic poetry as an expression of its idea of history. In many cases, the device of foreshadowing serves to juxtapose the heroes' expectations with the experiences they are going to make, thus forcefully underscoring the vanity of human expectations. To give a random example, when Hector is celebrating his victory over Patroclus and putting on Achilles' armor which Patroclus had worn, Zeus remarks (17.200–3, trans. Lattimore 1951):

> … Ah, poor wretch!
> There is no thought of death in your mind now, and yet death stands
> close beside you as you put on the immortal armour
> of a surpassing man.

Here, it is a divine observer who unveils the vanity of human expectations; in other passages it is the narrator's voice.[13]

Not only do the epic's setting, plot, and narrative technique foreground human fragility but the heroes themselves reflect on it. In his encounter with Diomedes on the battlefield, for example, Glaucus compares men to leaves and then illustrates the force of contingency by narrating the life of his grandfather Bellerophontes who had enjoyed much bliss and all of a sudden, for no reason, was ruined by the gods (Grethlein 2006a: 85–97; 2006b). Insight into the human condition is strongest in the case of the *Iliad*'s main hero, Achilles, who choses imperishable glory at the price of an early death over a long life at home without fame (9.412–16).

Before I discuss the performative context of the epics, I would like to touch briefly upon other hexametric poetry, specifically Hesiod's *Works and Days*. This is a didactic poem about agriculture in which various other genres are embedded. Of particular interest for the present investigation is a myth in which the narrator describes "man's passage from an original paradise-state to his present misery" (West 1978: 172) through the succession of five races, four of which are named after metals – from gold to iron (106–201). The meaning of this myth, its function in the narrative, and its Near Eastern parallels have raised many questions which I cannot tackle here.[14] Instead, I would like to emphasize two aspects that parallel the presentation of the past in Homer. First, it is striking that history is envisaged as a decline. The fourth race, consisting of the heroes who fought at Thebes and Troy, seems to be better than the preceding bronze race, but nonetheless the general tendency is one of decline reaching the bottom in the present race of iron men who have lost any sense of right and wrong and are afflicted by hardships of all

kinds. Second, just as in Homer this myth too distinguishes epochs, albeit without envisaging developments. The ages do not develop organically but start and end abruptly.

We do not have many sources that provide reliable data about performances of epic poetry in archaic Greece. Nonetheless, there is evidence that epic competitions formed a part of pan-Hellenic festivals.[15] The bardic performances at banquets in Homer further suggest recitals of parts of the epics at symposia. While pan-Hellenic festivals were open to a mixed audience, the symposium was a crucial institution for aristocrats.[16] Accordingly, scholars have seen the Homeric epics as an important tool for aristocratic assertions. And indeed, as I have already noted, nobles were wont to trace their lineages back to epic heroes.[17] On the other hand, it is striking that the heroes, notably the Greek leader Agamemnon, are not unproblematic as models.[18] While aristocrats may have tried to appropriate the cultural capital of the epic world, the poems could also be perceived as a reflection on political issues from a broader perspective.[19]

II.2   Elegy

In Greek elegy, we find a great variety of topics ranging from military exhortation to reflections on human fragility and erotic dalliances (e.g., West 1974; Fowler 1987). A few scholars, notably Ewen Bowie, had elaborated on the presentation of historical events in elegy, but it was not until 1992 (when a new fragment of Simonides on the battle of Plataea was published) that memory in elegy received its due attention.[20] By now, a majority of scholars seem to believe that there was a distinct group of elegies which narrated past events. Kowerski (2005: 63–73) and Sider (2006), on the other hand, have challenged the idea of a separate sub-genre of narrative elegy. They rightly point out the fragmentary state of our evidence and alert us to the possibility that references to the past formed part of elegies that also dealt with other matters. I find their arguments persuasive, particularly since many of the historical references in our fragments seem to be perfunctory and do not support the idea of extensive historical narratives.[21]

Nonetheless, memory in elegy deserves our attention. If we leave aside works of which we only have the titles, including Semonides' *Archaiologia Samiōn* (*The Early History of Samos*), Panyassis's *Ionian History* and Xenophanes' *ktisis* (foundation) poem, sizable fragments dealing with the past come, other than from Simonides, from two poets of the seventh century, Tyrtaeus and Mimnermus. Besides narrating the origin of the Spartan constitution (2, 4W), Tyrtaeus refers to conflicts about Messene (5–7W). Mimnermus tells events from Smyrna's history, its foundation (9W) as well as its fights with the Lydian king Gyges (13, 13a, 14W). From Simonides we have, in addition to the lengthy piece on the battle of Plataea, elegiac fragments on a sea-battle, probably Artemisium.[22] Scanty though these fragments are, they permit some tentative conclusions about memory in elegy.

To start with, unlike Homeric epic that follows a pan-Hellenic perspective, most elegies focus on the past of a single polis.[23] It further seems that, while epic focuses on a heroic past, elegy deals primarily with a more recent past all the way to contemporary history. However, this thesis needs at least two qualifications. First, there were also epics on contemporary history such as a poem on the Persian Wars by Choerilus of Samos. At the same time, some of Archilochus's fragments illustrate that elegy could also tackle mythical subjects.[24] Nonetheless, it seems safe to claim that epic concentrated on the heroic past and elegy was a genre more apt to focus on recent history. Second, as recent as the events may have been, elegy tends to cast them in a heroic register. This is most striking in the case of Simonides fr. 11W which first mentions the glory of Achilles and then invokes the Muse to assist the poet in also bestowing glory on the Greeks who fought at Plataea. What may have happened less than a couple of years ago thus appears in an epic light.

In Homer, we saw, the heroic past is not chronologically linked to the present. Elegy too disregards chronology when it directly juxtaposes recent and historical events or presents them in the same mold. I suggest that the heroization of recent events not only serves purposes of praise and glorification but also underscores their exemplary value. In the *Iliad*, Phoenix locates Meleager in the ancient time of *palai* (9.527–28: above) and Nestor calls his contemporaries much greater than present men (1.259–74). Both passages distance the recent past from the present in order to increase the authority of the examples they adduce. In the same vein, the presentation of recent events as heroic in elegy allows drawing conclusions *a maiore ad minus*.

Let me finally turn to the context of performance. There is evidence for the performance of elegies at public festivals but the main context for their circulation will have been the symposium.[25] Given the aristocratic background of the symposium, the prominence of the polis in elegies is striking and attests to the pressure on aristocrats to pursue their desire for distinction within the frame of the polis.[26] The construction of a common past seems to have been an important element for the cohesion of polis-communities. At the same time, Alcaeus's poems, though not elegiac, illustrate that the past could also be used for partisan interests (Grethlein 2010a: 72). Both for the community and individuals, the past constituted important capital.

II.3   Tragedy

Contingency dominates the epic idea of history; it is also prominent in elegy even if the fragmentary state of the extant evidence makes it hard to decide whether reflections on human fragility are linked to narratives about the past (Grethlein 2010a: 59–62). Obviously, though, another prominent commemorative genre, tragedy, shares with epic the emphasis on the changeability of human fortune. Despite the different media of presentation, a similar narrative technique marks the futility of human planning. Just as Homeric prolepses alert the audience to experiences which

will disappoint the characters' expectations, tragic irony plays with the audience's superior knowledge. When, for example, Oedipus commits himself to clarifying the murder of Laius with the words "I fight in his defence as if for my father" (Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 397), the dramatic irony sharply contrasts his deficient knowledge with the audience's insights.[27]

The mythical subjects also align the tragedians with Homer. There is only one fully preserved historical tragedy, Aeschylus's *Persians*, that deals with the battle of Salamis.[28] Epic vocabulary, epic catalogues, and a bard-like messenger give the recent event a heroic patina.[29] This distancing of the recent past throws into relief the relevance of "heroic vagueness" (the setting in a remote past) for tragedy, while paralleling the same tendency in elegy. As in elegy, though in a different way, the presentation of the past as heroic not only distances it from the present but also reinforces its exemplary value. Many have elaborated on tragedy as a genre that negotiates questions of concern to the polis.[30] Of course, the larger-than-life frame of tragedy also permits conclusions *a maiore ad minus* but it seems equally, if not more important that, just as the generic polyphony allows tragedy to raise questions without giving clear-cut answers, the heroic world creates the distance in which controversial issues can be safely negotiated.[31]

By the same token, if we follow Aristotle (for example, *Rhetoric* 1386a24–6), the feeling of pity and fear, if it is to be effective, also requires some similarity with, or proximity to, the tragic heroes. The fact that myths had no fixed form allowed the tragedians to shape their own versions so as to render them significant to their present audiences. They also made their plays resonate with the audience through what Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1989: 136) has called "zooming-devices," that is, words and concepts that were alien to the heroic cosmos but stemmed from the world of the audience and thereby "had the effect of bringing the world of the play nearer, pushing the audience into relating their experiences and assumptions directly to the play." For example, in his *Orestes* Euripides has the title hero stay in Argos after the murder of his mother. The political instability and the attacks of the enraged mob depicted in the play are reminiscent of the political situation, including fierce conflicts between oligarchs and democrats, prevailing in Athens at the time (409?). Contemporary parallels are reinforced by the word "comradeship" (*hetaireia*) with which the friendship between Orestes and Pylades is characterized (1072, 1079). *Hetaireia* is extremely rare in tragedy – these are its only occurrences in the entire extant work of Euripides;[32] hence its use in the context of a struggle between the *jeunesse dorée* and the people is striking and would not have failed to evoke the contemporary clubs of young, often subversive aristocrats. These and other "zooming-devices" permit an exemplary use of the past without explicitly juxtaposing it with the present. Such indirect allusions to the present suffice to establish the past as a foil which sheds light on the world of the audience through contrast, similarity, or refraction.

The symposium as performative context makes elegy's focus on polis history strik-ing. The contents of tragedy, on the other hand, tend to be distanced from Athens – rather than in Athens, the plots usually are located in Thebes, Argos, Mycenae, or

Troy – but the place of performance still reveals the polis' grip on the past. There are hints that tragedies were reperformed at smaller festivals outside Athens (Easterling 1994; Taplin 1999), and after 386 reperformances in Athens were permitted, but otherwise tragedies were composed for single performances at public festivals, notably the Great Dionysia (Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 57–125; Parke 1977: 125–36; Goldhill 1990). They were embedded in a net of other poetic performances and rituals through which the polis of Athens celebrated itself (for example, citizens whose activities had greatly benefited the community were honored publicly). The plays' performative context thus underscores the distancing effect of contingency. Not only do disasters take place in Thebes or in Argos, but the merciless rule of contingency at these places contrasts with the regularity and continuity established by the rituals of the Great Dionysia (Grethlein 2010a: 96–97).

Before I turn to memory in oratory, I will briefly try to pull some strings together. We have seen that in poetic accounts of the past contingency and human fragility loom large. It is also striking that the past is rarely connected to the present by a sequence of historical developments. Instead, an exemplary use of the past dominates that, regardless of temporal distances, directly – whether implicitly or explicitly – juxtaposes past and present. These patterns in the use of memory can be found in other poetic genres as well. Even if I cannot discuss this here in detail, I will at least mention the case of the epinician. In Pindar's highly stylized praise of athletic victors, human fragility is foregrounded while mythical narratives are evoked as foils to the present (Grethlein 2010a: 19–46).

These features, I think, are linked to one another. Contingency makes it hard to construe developments. Where chance rules, it is impossible for history to have a direction. The widespread assumption that the Greeks did not know change is therefore misleading. For instance, in a classic study Boman (1968) contrasts the static view of time in Greek culture with the dynamic time concept in the Hebrew tradition. Yet in Greek thinking changeability is so prominent that it challenges the notion of development. It further destabilizes actions and identities. The view of the past as exemplary constitutes an attempt to balance the rule of contingency (Grethlein 2006a: 108–12). The direct juxtaposition of different events presupposes some degree of regularity – otherwise a comparison would not be possible. Moreover, a past that is presented as greater than the present can serve as a model for the latter. Mythical and historical examples thus inspire actions and counteract the destabilizing force of contingency. Seen from this perspective, the neglect of chronology is not necessarily the consequence of an oral culture; rather, it may be owed to an idea of history that emphasizes the exemplary use of the past and pits it against contingency.

III   Oratory

Although, with few exceptions, all extant Greek speeches stem from the fourth century and later, it is safe to assume that oratory had also played an important role before (Kennedy 1963; Cole 1991; Schiappa 1999). The ideal epic hero was

"a speaker of words and a doer of actions" (*Il.* 9.443; Martin 1989; Roisman 2007). The institutionalization of the polis that made eloquence an important asset can be traced back to Homer (Raaflaub 1993). Eventually, in the Athenian democracy the art of speaking became so crucial that, as Plato illustrates, criticism of democracy often took the form of a critique of rhetoric (Yunis 1996; Ober 1998).

In the assembly and law-courts speakers frequently buttressed their arguments with examples from the past.[33] While in poetry the authority of myth is felt so strongly that even recent events are envisaged in "heroic vagueness," the Attic orators preferred recent history. For instance, when Demosthenes searches for evidence that Athens' freedom and power depend on its navy, he offers two pairs of examples. First, he caps a reference to the Persian Wars with the comment, "Well, but that is ancient history. Take something that you have all seen" (22.14), and mentions as a more recent case the assistance provided to the Euboeans in 357. With a similar phrase, he then turns from the Peloponnesian War to the last war with the Spartans in the 370s: "And why should one discuss ancient history?" (22.15). This example suggests that the often-noted neglect of myths in oratory is due less to a rigid divide between myth and history than to a gradual distinction between recent and remote events. While it is noteworthy that Demosthenes actually bothers to mention what he considers ancient history, this and further passages reveal that in general recent examples had greater persuasive force than ancient ones.[34]

The comparison of poetry with oratory alerts us to the relevance of the context for uses of memory. The remoteness of the heroic world made it well suited to negotiate issues of identity and moral conduct in the elevated settings of the symposium and public ceremonies, but it was disadvantageous for the pragmatic interactions in the everyday world of the assembly and the law-courts.

Orators regularly bent the truth to make history suit their argumentative needs.[35] Their practice not only involved questionable interpretations but also changes of chronology and the invention of events. Of course, such historical blunders could not go against common knowledge for this would have undermined the argument, but it seems that orators were granted a certain degree of freedom in molding the past as needed by their case. Isocrates, for example, not only gives different versions of the Athenians' mythical intervention on behalf of Adrastus and the Argives – in the *Panegyric* a battle is necessary (4.54–56), while in the *Panathenaic Oration* the conflict is resolved peacefully (12.168–71) – but he even admits the contradiction and explains it in terms of suitability for his differing arguments (12.172–74). The freedom to adjust the presentation of the past to the needs of the here and now makes it a useful argumentative tool in the hands of the orators, just as it allows the tragedians to render their traditional subjects relevant to their audiences.

Before I turn to commemoration in art, it is worth mentioning a particular speech genre, the Athenian funeral oration (Loraux 1986a). Some time after the Persian Wars, the Athenians began giving the war dead of each year a public burial in the Kerameikos Cemetery. Part of the ceremony was a speech delivered by an outstanding public figure. The preserved funeral orations all follow, more or less, a common structure and feature a run through Athens' history from the beginnings

to the present. It seems that the nearly annual repetition led to the establishment of a somewhat fixed catalogue of ancestral achievements, including notably the fight against the Amazons, the support offered the Argives (after the defeat of the "Seven against Thebes") and the children of Heracles, and Athenian exploits during the Persian Wars. Defeats, on the other hand, are glossed over. In the words of the funeral speakers, Athenian history appears as an uninterrupted chain of great deeds. The blurring of boundaries between recent and mythical past parallels the casting in epic light of recent events that is typical of elegy.[36] Thus, on the one hand, the preference for the recent past distinguishes deliberative speeches from poetic accounts; on the other, as the funeral speeches illustrate, memory in oratory and poetry shares important features.

IV   Art

A survey of artistic presentations of the past in archaic and classical Greece is beyond the scope of this paper but I will draw attention to some striking parallels to the use of memory in literary sources. To start with, the poets' preference for mythical over historical subjects is paralleled in vase-paintings as well as in monuments. That being said, the fifth century saw a large number of artistic presentations of recent events.[37] For example, according to Pausanias (1.15.1–3), two of the paintings in the "Painted Stoa," constructed around 460, showed the recent battles of Marathon and Oinoe.[38] Interestingly, in our present context, the other walls featured two mythical battles, the conquest of Troy and the Amazonomachy. Thus, just as in literary presentations, mythical and recent past were juxtaposed. In the same vein, inscriptions on a monument in the Agora, erected after the battle of Eion in Thrace (475), praise the recent achievement in parallel with the Athenian participation in the siege of Troy.[39] On the Acropolis, the pediment of the temple of Athena Nike, built in the 420s, represented the battle between gods and giants and a mythical battle, perhaps against the Amazons, whereas the friezes, according to the interpretation of most archaeologists, illustrate historical themes, probably a battle of the Persian Wars and a later battle among Greeks (Hölscher 1973: 91–8; Castriota 1992: 179–80).

Yet it has also been argued that the temple's north and west friezes refer to the Trojan War (Felten 1984: 127–29). The ambiguity permitting such controversies highlights the fact that historical and mythical battles were cast in the same register. Similar observations can be made with respect to vase paintings. For example, a scene on a cup of the Brygos-painter in Oxford, dating from the first third of the fifth century, has been interpreted as representing both the theft of the Palladion by Odysseus and Diomedes and the Greek raid on the Persian camp at Plataea.[40] Just as poets and orators epicize the recent past, the painters use the same register to depict mythical and contemporary warfare. Perhaps, in some cases attempts to clarify the reference fail to do justice to a polyvalent semantic which makes different references possible and thereby invites the spectator to compare historical with mythical events.[41]

The frequency of examples relating to representations of the Persian Wars seems to support the thesis that it is this extraordinary event that caused the blurring of the boundaries between recent and mythical history. I do not deny that the Persian Wars provided material that was conducive to, and even seemed to provoke, heroization, and yet it is important that the distancing of recent events is not limited to this case, but clearly is a general mode of memory in ancient Greece. We have seen that in the *Iliad* what has taken place only one generation ago appears as belonging to another world, and that Tyrtaeus and Mimnermus epicize history. Epinician poetry affords another interesting example: in Bacchylides 5, a historical event, the life of Croesus, fills the place of myth and is evoked to shed light on the praise of the victor. These poems, just like artistic representations of the past, illustrate a mode of memory that remembers events without paying attention to their temporal context.

V   The Rise of Greek Historiography

Recent work has significantly enhanced our understanding of the rise of Greek historiography by contextualizing Herodotus in his time. The "father of history" has been viewed in the context of the contemporary scientific revolution, he has been read against the backdrop of the politics of his own day, and his relations with oral traditions have been elucidated.[42] In a final step, I will now offer a fresh assessment of Herodotus and also Thucydides by contextualizing them in the field of memory. Since the first historians invented history only in the sense that they launched a new genre to describe and interpret it, it is fruitful to view them in the tension between innovation and tradition with regard to other commemorative genres and media.

The explicit and implicit critique of poetry and oratory we find in both Herodotus and Thucydides signals that they are off to a new start (Grethlein 2010a: 151–86, 206–39). And indeed, several aspects distinguish their approach to the past from earlier ones. First, a critical method that applies principles of contemporary science and legal procedures marks an important innovation.[43] Second, whereas poetry and oratory were primarily composed for oral performance, the *Histories* are written works.[44] Third, we have seen that in other media the past tends to be in the grip of the polis. Herodotus and Thucydides, on the other hand, follow Homer in their pan-Hellenic perspective. Fourth, against the poets' preference for the mythical past, the two historians choose recent history, Thucydides even contemporary events.

However, the discrepancy between other historians and nonhistoriographic use of memory seems to have been less marked. Remains of local historians who wrote at the end of the fifth and in the fourth century are lamentably scanty, but in a recent monograph Clarke (2008) has made a strong case that these historians, besides taking the perspective of a single polis and not exerting much critical care, gave mythical history much space and disseminated their works in oral performances.[45]

Even if we stick with Herodotus and Thucydides, it is obvious that they share much common ground with the very genres against which they define their new approach to the past. Human fragility and contingency that are at the core of epic and tragedy figure prominently in the works of both historians. Herodotus even underscores this idea of history with a similar narrative technique that, through anachronisms, juxtaposes expectations and experiences of characters and thereby establishes tragic irony (Chiasson 2003). Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides has no space in his *History* for divine interventions but he nonetheless foregrounds chance, failures, and suffering in a way strongly reminiscent of poetic memory. In particular, scholars have been struck by the presentation of the Sicilian expedition in a tragic mold.[46]

I have argued that the exemplary use of the past is an attempt to counteract contingency by establishing regularity and providing models for action. Herodotus and Thucydides parallel poets and orators in using this antidote, albeit in a distinct way.[47] In Herodotus's *Histories*, a view of the past as exemplary is constituted by the repeated pattern of the rise and fall of empires which is underscored by smaller patterns such as warnings by wise advisors, hubristic laughing, or the crossing of geographical boundaries.[48] This perspective is not limited to the past but, as scholars have amply demonstrated in the last two decades, a series of prolepses at the end of the *Histories* evokes the later rise of Athens. Readers are thereby prompted to think of contemporaneous intra-Hellenic conflicts against the backdrop of the Persian Wars (e.g., Raaflaub 1987; Stadter 1992; Moles 1996). It may not have been Herodotus's sole purpose to warn the Athenians, but he obviously thought that his account could teach his contemporaries a lesson or two.

It is much more difficult to discern patterns in Thucydides' *History* (Grethlein 2010a: 254–68). At the same time, Thucydides explicitly announces the usefulness of his work for those "who will wish to look at the plain truth about both past events and those that at some future time, in accordance with human nature, will recur again in similar or comparable ways" (1.22.4). Although this passage has been interpreted controversially (Grethlein 2010a: 210–11), it reveals that Thucydides has an essentialist view of history and assumes that certain structures are and will be repeated. His methodical rigor is not owed to a positivist objectivism, but aims at providing his readers with reliable insights for a better understanding of the present and a more accurate assessment of the future.

This exemplary view of the past distinguishes Herodotus and Thucydides from modern historians. Reinhart Koselleck has argued (1979: 38–66) that the maxim of "history as a teacher for life" (*historia magistra vitae*) lost its value around 1800 CE; while he may have underestimated the general desire to learn from the past, few professional historians would view history in this way today. On the other hand, the exemplary use of the past aligns Herodotus and Thucydides with other media of memory in ancient Greece. Yet an important distinction remains: while poets and orators mostly draw on the exemplary mode of memory to glorify recent or present events and to legitimize claims, Herodotus and Thucydides rather use them for critical purposes. They evoke the past as a foil which throws into relief problems and deficiencies in the present (Grethlein 2006c: 505).

Overall, then, as innovative as the new genre launched by Herodotus and Thucydides is, it nonetheless relies on an idea of history that is similar to other commemorative genres. My survey has shown that different media and genres offered distinct approaches to the past in various contexts and narrative forms. At the same time, a perfunctory and generalizing comparison with modern historical attitudes reveals that all these approaches circle around a common gravitational center (Grethlein 2010a: 281–90). While the focus on "developments" undermines the use of history as a teacher in the modern age, in ancient Greek memory the exemplary view of history serves to create some stability against the detrimental force of contingency.

I am far from claiming that the idea of "development," so dear to us, was alien to the Archaic and Classical Ages. Already Hesiod's *Theogony* uses the form of a catalog to lay out the history of the gods, from initial chaos to the just rule of the Olympian gods. As the extant fragments of his *Ehoiai* illustrate, other archaic poems and, by the sixth century, works in prose presented genealogies of heroes (Thomas 1989: 173–94; Fowler 2000). In addition to genealogies, especially in the fifth century some texts envisage human history as a development and some, including the famous *Ode to Man* in Sophocles' *Antigone*, even imply the notion of progress. However, it is not until the "Axial Time" around 1800 CE that the concept of development starts to dominate historical thinking and that the past becomes a "foreign country." This new approach finds its expression in the coining of the term "history" in the singular that signifies the past and present as an organic process (Koselleck 1975: 647–58). It is not without significance that the ancient Greeks did not know a comparable term.

Let me end by putting up for discussion a label which I derive from literary theory. In his treatise, *Laokoon*, Lessing offers a brilliant comparison of narrative with pictorial presentations (1962: VI 7–187 [1766]). While pictures are more or less static, narratives are sequential. They unfold actions that take place in time and themselves proceed in time. On the other hand, Joseph Frank has shown that a sequential understanding falls short in the case of many modern poems and novels.[49] Works by such authors as Mallarmé, Flaubert, or Barnes require a look at the whole which transcends sequence. For this phenomenon which seems characteristic of modern literature but can also be discovered in earlier texts, Frank coined the term "spatial form." I think that Frank's notion of spatiality can help us grasp an essential aspect of Greek memory. Not only in artistic but also in narrative presentations we have noticed the tendency not to envisage the sequence which leads from the past to the present but to juxtapose various events with one another, regardless of temporal differences. The Greeks were not incapable of conceptualizing sequences from the past to the present but it seems that a spatial view of the past, one that regards simultaneously past and present without considering the development from the former to the latter, was more prominent. The Greeks were in the grip of the past, as van Groningen (1953) has it, but this past, in historiography as well as in other media, was in the firm grip of the present.

Abbreviations

ABSA   *Annual of the British School at Athens*
AJPh   *American Journal of Philology*
ASNP   *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, classe di lettere e filosofia*
ClAnt   *Classical Antiquity*
CPh   *Classical Philology*
FGE   Page 1981
HSCPh   *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
ICS   *Illinois Classical Studies*
JHS   *Journal of Hellenic Studies*
PCPhS   *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
QS   *Quaderni di storia*
RE   Pauly et al. 1893–1980
RHR   *Revue de l'histoire des religions*
TAPhA   *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*
W   West 1992
ZPE   *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Notes

1   All dates are BCE unless indicated otherwise.
2   Cf. Snell 1952; Strasburger 1972 on Homer; Steinmetz 1969 on elegy. For new approaches to memory before and besides historiography, see Loraux 1986a (funeral orations); Thomas 1989 (oral traditions); Alcock 2002 (archaeology); Higbie 2003 (Lindian chronicle); Grethlein 2006a (Homer). Boedeker 1998 presents an important survey of memory of the Persian Wars; for a penetrating analysis of divergent polis memories, see Yates 2009.
3   For a full examination of the past in fifth-century Greek literature and the rise of Greek historiography, see Grethlein 2010a.
4   On literacy and orality in ancient Greece, see, for example, Havelock 1982; 1986; Thomas 1989. On books and reading in classical Greece, see Kenyon 1951; Turner 1952; and, specifically for Herodotus's *Histories*, Flory 1980.
5   The importance of oral sources for Herodotus is stressed by Jacoby 1913; Aly 1969. Murray 1987 applied anthropological insights, particularly by Vansina 1965, to oral history. For further explorations of this aspect, see the contributions in Luraghi 2001.
6   Cf. Finley 1975: 28; Jacoby 1913: 413 on family traditions as sources of Herodotus. See also Bethe 1935; Thomas 1989: 95–154.
7   See Thomas 1989: 107–8 who observes that in democratic Athens recent history became more important.
8   See, however, Latacz 2004 who, inspired by new excavations in Hisarlik, finds much information about the Trojan War in the *Iliad*. For a critique of his claims, see Ulf 2003; Grethlein 2010b.

9 Both mode and time of the composition of the Homeric epics are highly controversial. Whereas many German scholars emphasize the role of writing (e.g., Kullmann 1985; Latacz 1996), Anglo-American classicists tend to follow the tradition of Parry 1971 and Lord 2000 and stress the orality of composition and tradition (e.g., Janko 1982; Nagy 1996). By the same token, the dates suggested for the fixation vary greatly. That being said, it is widely agreed that the epics at least rest on an oral tradition and many scholars see the eighth and seventh centuries as a decisive stage in the fixation of the epics' text.

10 For a qualification of this decline model, see Grethlein 2006a: 53–58.

11 In Grethlein 2006a: 322–3, I argue that, in a few self-referential passages, the *Iliad* itself envisages its use as an *exemplum*.

12 Cf. Grethlein 2006a: 205–57. On differences between *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Grethlein 2012.

13 By the same token, contingency is underscored by analepses in which the narrator or characters look back to expectations that have just been disappointed: Grethlein 2006a: 240.

14 See, for example, Vernant 1960; Nagy 1979: 151–73; Most 1997; Currie 2012.

15 The Panathenaea are the most prominent case, see Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates* 102 and Davison 1955: 7 with further sources. See also Hdt. 5.67, providing evidence for rhapsodic contests at Sicyon in the sixth century. On Panionian recitations on Delos, see Thuc. 3.104. On epic performances in general, see the discussion by Kirk 1962: 274–81; also Nagy 1996; Collins 2001.

16 The literature on the symposium is vast. See, for example, Murray 1990; Slater 1991; Schmitt Pantel 1992.

17 See Morris 1988: 757; West 1978 at Hesiod, *Works and Days* 106–201. For a later example, see the examination of the Philaid genealogy by Thomas 1989: 161–73; Möller 1996: 21–25.

18 On the ambiguity of Agamemnon as a model, see Grethlein 2006c: 495–96.

19 Raaflaub 1993: 46–59; Hammer 2002. See also Grethlein 2010b: 130–1.

20 Besides Bowie 1986, 2001, 2010, see also Steinmetz 1969; Lasserre 1976. Parsons 1992 provided the first edition of the "new Simonides," followed immediately by West 1992: II. 118–20. For interpretations, see the contributions in Boedeker and Sider 2001; Kowerski 2005.

21 For a survey of the length of historical narratives in extant fragments, see the appendix in Grethlein 2010a: 291–96.

22 For a discussion of these fragments and their attribution, see Rutherford 2001: 35–37.

23 This is obviously true for Tyrtaeus and Mimnermus, and although most scholars ascribe to Simonides' Plataea elegy a pan-Hellenic perspective, I find the focus on Sparta in the long fragment 11W noteworthy; see also Burzacchini 1995: 23–26; Aloni 2001: 102–4.

24 See, besides Archilochus fr. 286–89W (apparently from an elegy on Heracles), P. Oxy. 4708 (also attributed to Archilochus) with more than 20 consecutive lines on a mythical theme, the repulse of the Achaean army by Telephus. It seems likely, however, that the mythical narrative was embedded in the elegy as an *exemplum*: Obbink 2006: 8.

25 Here I disagree with Bowie 1986 who suggests that public festivals were the major occasion for the recital of narrative elegies.

26 See, however, Irwin 2005: 49 who contextualizes exhortatory elegy in the symposium and emphasizes its use for purposes of social distinction.

27 See, for example, Pucci 1992: 79–80 and, on tragic irony in Sophocles, Kirkwood 1958: 247–87.

28 We also know the names of two other tragedies, *Milētou Halōsis* (*The Conquest of Miletus*) and *Phoenissae*, both by Phrynichus, that staged events of the Persian Wars. On historical tragedies, see Castellani 1986; Hall 1996: 7–9.

29 See Grethlein 2010a: 75–79. For an interpretation of *Persae* as a reflection on tragic memory, see Grethlein 2007.

30 See, for example, the contributions in Winkler and Zeitlin 1990; Sommerstein et al. 1993; Pelling 1997.

31 Zeitlin 1990 explores the significance of Thebes and Argos as places of "the other." Croally 1994: 40–41 emphasizes the different levels at which the tragic action is distanced from the audience.

32 The only other use of the word in the extant corpus of tragedy occurs in Sophocles, *Ajax* 683.

33 On the use of the past in oratory, see Jost 1936; Schmitz-Kahlmann 1939; Pearson 1941; Perlman 1961; Nouhaud 1982; Loraux 1986a; Worthington 1994; Gotteland 2001; Clarke 2008: 245–303.

34 Nouhaud 1982: 12–23. See also Clarke 2008: 252–74 for a comparison of the references to the past in Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Isocrates. However, as Worthington 1994: 113 points out, nearly all of our evidence from the classical period comes from Athens, and since Athens had its greatest political successes in the fifth century, it may have been natural to refer to the recent past.

35 See, for example, Perlman 1961; Missiou 1992: 59–60 with further literature in n. 6.

36 The ensuing difficulty to distinguish between individual epochs comes to the fore in phrases such as "those, who are lying here." Not only are these phrases applied indiscriminately to Athenians who died in mythical and recent wars, but time and again the reference is ambiguous: Grethlein 2010a: 115.

37 For depictions of historical events in classical Greece, see Hölscher 1973, 1998; also Francis 1990 and Castriota 1992 on official art.

38 Pausanias's testimony has been questioned, since the latter battle, between Athenians and Argives, is not mentioned by ancient historians: Jeffery 1965: 50–1; Francis and Vickers 1985. Hölscher 1973: 68–70 defends Pausanias; see also Castriota 1992: 76–89.

39 Simonides 40 (a) *FGE* = Aeschines 3.183 ff. See Plutarch, *Cimon* 7.6 and Demosthenes 20.112 on the herms and the inscriptions. For bibliog., see Hölkeskamp 2001: 348 n. 104; for the semantics of the monument's placement in the northwestern corner of the Agora, Hölscher 1998: 166–67.

40 Beazley 1963: 399: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1911.615 from Cerveteri, augmented by frg. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1973.175.2. Both interpretations are suggested by Herford 1914. While Beazley 1963: 31 is inclined to favor the mythical interpretation, other scholars have suggested yet another contemporary scene, the rise of the spirits of two warriors of Marathon that are going to protect Greece against the Persians; cf. Barrett and Vickers 1978: 17–18; Kron 1999: 65–66.

41 Cf. Giuliani 2003: 282–83 who argues for abandoning the dichotomy "Mythos – Alltag" in the interpretation of Greek vase paintings.

42 On Herodotus and contemporary science, see Lateiner 1986; Thomas 2000; Raaflaub 2002; on Herodotus and the politics of his day, cf. Raaflaub 1987; Stadter 1992; Moles 1996; on Herodotus and oral traditions, see the contributions in Luraghi 2001.

43 On Herodotus and science, see n. 42 above; on this aspect in Thucydides: Cochrane 1929; Weidauer 1954; Thomas 2006; on the influence of forensic practice on both: for example, de Lima 1996.

44 It may be noted, however, that Herodotus seems to have presented his work also in oral presentations; see Thomas 2000. On Thucydides' emphasis on the medium of his work, see Loraux 1986b; Edmunds 1993; Morrison 2004.

45 For divergent polis memories of the Persian Wars, see Yates 2009.

46 Cornford 1907; Stahl 2003: 173–222. Macleod 1983 argues that Thucydides is not so much indebted to tragedy as to epic.

47 Here I would like to add a nuance to Boedeker's assessment of the rise of Greek historiography (1998). She suggests that Herodotus's and Thucydides' innovation consisted in "showing not a timeless world full of paradigms and analogies, but rather a time-bound picture of development, inconsistency, and change" (202). Of course, the *Histories* are narratives and thereby sequential. At the same time, however, an important aspect of these works is a paradigmatic use of history which aligns them with other nonlinear presentations of the past. For a fuller treatment of Herodotus's and Thucydides' exemplary use of the past, see Grethlein 2011. On the prominence of a paradigmatic presentation of the past in ancient historiography in general, see Raaflaub 2010.

48 See Immerwahr 1966 on the overall structure of the *Histories*; Lateiner 1977; Flory 1978 on laughing; Bischoff 1932; Lattimore 1939 on the wise advisor; Lateiner 1989: 126–44 on boundaries.

49 Frank 1963; for discussions of his approach, see Smitten and Daghistany 1981.

References

Alcock, S.E. 2002. *Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments, and Memories.* Cambridge.

Aloni, A. 2001. "The Proem of Simonides' *Plataea Elegy* and the Circumstances of Its Performance." In Boedeker and Sider 2001: 86–105.

Aly, W. 1969. *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen. Eine Untersuchung über die volkstümlichen Elemente der altgriechischen Prosaerzählung.* Göttingen.

Barrett, A.A., and M. Vickers. 1978. "The Oxford Brygos Cup Reconsidered." *JHS* 98: 17–24.

Beazley, J.D. 1963. *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters.* Oxford.

Bethe, E. 1935. *Ahnenbild und Familiengeschichte bei Römern und Griechen.* Munich.

Bischoff, H. 1932. *Der Warner bei Herodot.* Dissertation, University of Marburg.

Boedeker, D. 1998. "Presenting the Past in Fifth-Century Athens." In Boedeker and K. Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, 185–202. Cambridge, MA.

Boedeker, D., and D. Sider (eds.). 2001. *The New Simonides: Contexts of Praise and Desire.* Oxford.

Boman, T. 1968. *Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem griechischen.* 5th edn. Göttingen.

Bowie, E. 1986. "Early Greek Elegy, Symposium and Public Festival." *JHS* 106: 13–35.

Bowie, E. 2001. "Ancestors of Historiography in Early Greek Elegiac and Iambic Poetry?" In Luraghi 2001: 45–66.

Bowie, E. 2010. "Historical Narrative in Archaic and Early Classical Greek Elegy." In Konstan and Raaflaub 2010: 145–66.

Burzacchini, G. 1995. "Note al nuovo Simonide." *Eikasmos* 6: 21–38.

Calame, C. 1996. *Mythe et histoire dans l'antiquité grecque. La création symbolique d'une colonie.* Lausanne.

Castellani, V. 1986. "Clio vs. Melpomene; or, Why so Little Historical Drama from Classical Athens?" *Themes in Drama* 8: 1–16.

Castriota, D. 1992. *Myth, Ethos, and Actuality: Official Art in Fifth-Century B.C. Athens.* Madison.

Chiasson, C.C. 2003. "Herodotus' Use of Attic Tragedy in the *Lydian logos.*" *ClAnt* 22: 5–36.

Clarke, M. 2008. *Making Time for the Past: Local History and the Polis.* Oxford.

Cochrane, C.N. 1929. *Thucydides and the Science of History.* Oxford.

Cole, T. 1991. *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece.* Baltimore.

Collins, D.B. 2001. "Improvisation in Rhapsodic Performance." *Helios* 28: 11–27.

Cornford, F.M. 1907. *Thucydides Mythistoricus.* London.

Croally, N.T. 1994. *Euripidean Polemic: The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy.* Cambridge.

Currie, B. 2012. "Hesiod on Human History." In Marincola 2012: 37–64.

Davison, J.A. 1955. "Peisistratus and Homer." *TAPhA* 86: 1–21.

de Lima, P.F.B. 1996. *L'inchiesta e la prova: immagine storiografica, pratica giuridica e retorica nella Grecia classica.* Turin.

Easterling, P.E. 1994. "Euripides outside Athens: A Speculative Note." *ICS* 19: 73–80.

Edmunds, L. 1993. "Thucydides in the Act of Writing." In *Tradizione e innovazione nella cultura greca da Omero all'età ellenistica. Scritti in onore di Bruno Gentili*, II: 831–52. Rome.

Felten, F. 1984. *Griechische tektonische Friese archaischer und klassischer Zeit.* Waldsassen.

Finley, M.I. 1975. *The Use and Abuse of History.* London.

Flory, S. 1978. "Laughter, Tears and Wisdom in Herodotus." *AJPh* 99: 145–53.

Flory, S. 1980. "Who Read Herodotus' *Histories*?" *AJPh* 101: 12–28.

Fowler, R. 2000. *Early Greek Mythography*, I: *Texts.* Oxford.

Fowler, R.L. 1987. *The Nature of Early Greek Lyric: Three Preliminary Studies.* Toronto.

Francis, E.D. 1990. *Image and Idea in Fifth-Century Greece: Art and Literature after the Persian Wars.* London.

Francis, E.D., and M. Vickers. 1985. "The Oenoe Painting in the Stoa Poikile and Herodotus." *ABSA* 80: 99–113.

Frank, J. 1963. "Spatial Form in Modern Literature." In Frank (ed.), *The Widening Gyre*, 3–62. New Brunswick.

Giuliani, L. 2003. "Kriegers Tischsitten – oder: die Grenzen der Menschlichkeit. Achill als Problemfigur." In K.-J. Hölkeskamp, J. Rüsen, E. Stein-Hölkeskamp, and H.T. Grütter (eds.), *Sinn (in) der Antike. Orientierungssysteme, Leitbilder und Wertkonzepte im Altertum*, 135–61. Mainz.

Goldhill, S. 1990. "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology." In Winkler and Zeitlin 1990: 97–129.

Gotteland, S. 2001. *Mythe et rhétorique. Les exemples mythiques dans le discours politique de l'Athènes classique.* Paris.

Grethlein, J. 2006a. *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias. Eine Untersuchung aus phänomenologischer und narratologischer Perspektive.* Göttingen.

Grethlein, J. 2006b. "Individuelle Identität und conditio humana. Die Bedeutung und Funktion von GENEH im Blättergleichnis in Il. 6,146–149." *Philologus* 150: 3–13.

Grethlein, J. 2006c. "The Manifold Uses of the Epic Past. The Embassy Scene in Hdt. 7.153–163." *AJPh* 127: 485–509.

Grethlein, J. 2007. "The Hermeneutics and Poetics of Memory in Aeschylus' *Persae*." *Arethusa* 40: 363–96.

Grethlein, J. 2010a. *The Greeks and their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century* BCE. Cambridge.

Grethlein, J. 2010b. "From Imperishable Glory to History: The *Iliad* and the Trojan War." In Konstan and Raaflaub 2010: 122–44.

Grethlein, J. 2011. "Historia magistra vitae in Herodotus and Thucydides?" In A. Lianeri (ed.), *Ancient History and Western Historical Thought: The Construction of Classical Time(s)* 247–63. Cambridge.

Grethlein, J. 2012. "Homer and Heroic History." In Marincola 2012: 14–36.

Hall, E. 1996. *Aeschylus: Persians*. Warminster.

Hammer, D. 2002. *The* Iliad *as Politics: The Performance of Political Thought*. Norman.

Havelock, E.A. 1982. *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences*. Princeton.

Havelock, E.A. 1986. *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven.

Herford, M.A.B. 1914. "A Cup by Brygos at Oxford." *JHS* 34: 106–13.

Higbie, C. 2003. *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of their Past*. Oxford.

Hölkeskamp, K.-J. 2001. "Marathon—vom Monument zum Mythos." In D. Papenfuß and V.M. Strocka (eds.), *Gab es das Griechische Wunder? Griechenland zwischen dem Ende des 6. und der Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, 329–53. Mainz.

Hölscher, T. 1973. *Griechische Historienbilder des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr*. Würzburg.

Hölscher, T. 1998. "Images and Political Identity: The Case of Athens." In Boedeker and Raaflaub 1998: 153–83.

Immerwahr, H.R. 1966. *Form and Thought in Herodotus*. Cleveland.

Irwin, E. 2005. *Solon and Early Greek Poetry: The Politics of Exhortation*. Cambridge.

Jacoby, F. 1913. "Herodotos." *RE* supp. II: 205–520.

Janko, R. 1982. *Homer, Hesiod, and the Hymns: Diachronic Development in Epic Diction*. Cambridge.

Jeffery, L.H. 1965. "The Battle of Oinoe in the Stoa Poikile: A Problem in Greek Art and History." *ABSA* 60: 42–57.

Jost, K. 1936. *Das Beispiel und Vorbild der Vorfahren bei den attischen Rednern und Geschichtsschreibern bis Demosthenes*. Paderborn.

Kennedy, G.A. 1963. *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*. Princeton.

Kenyon, F.G. 1951. *Books and Readers in Greece and Rome*. 2nd edn. Oxford.

Kirk, G.S. 1962. *The Songs of Homer*. Cambridge.

Kirkwood, G.M. 1958. *A Study of Sophoclean Drama*. Ithaca, NY.

Konstan, D., and K.A. Raaflaub (eds.). 2010. *Epic and History*. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Kosand elleck, R. 1975. "Geschichte, Historie. V. Die Herausbildung des modernen Geschichtsbegriffs." In O. Brunner, W. Conze, and R. Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, II: 647–91. Stuttgart.

Koselleck, R. 1979. *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt am Main.

Kowerski, L. 2005. *Simonides on the Persian Wars: A Study of the Elegiac Verses of the "New Simonides"*. New York.

Kron, U. 1999. "Patriotic Heroes." In R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, 61–83. Stockholm.

Kullmann, W. 1985. "Gods and Men in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*." *HSCPh* 89: 1–23.

Lasserre, F. 1976. "L'historiographie grecque à l'époque archaïque." *QS* 4: 113–42.

Latacz, J. 1996. *Homer, His Art and His World*. Trans. J.P. Holoka. Ann Arbor.

Latacz, J. 2004. *Troy and Homer. Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery*. Trans. E. Windle and R. Ireland. Oxford.

Lateiner, D. 1977. "No Laughing Matter: A Literary Tactic in Herodotus." *TAPhA* 107: 173–82.

Lateiner, D. 1986. "Early Greek Medical Writers and Herodotus." *Antichthon* 20: 1–20.

Lateiner, D. 1989. *The Historical Method of Herodotus*. Toronto.

Lattimore, R. 1939. "The Wise Adviser in Herodotus." *CPh* 34: 24–35.

Lattimore, R. (trans.). 1951. *The Iliad of Homer*. Chicago.

Lessing, G.E. 1962 [1766]. *Laokoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. Trans. E.A. McCormick. Indianapolis.

Loraux, N. 1986a. *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*. Trans. A. Sheridan. Cambridge.

Loraux, N. 1986b. "Thucydide a écrit la guerre du Péloponnèse." *Metis* 1: 139–61.

Lord, A. 2000. *The Singer of Tales*. 2nd edn. Cambridge.

Luraghi, N. (ed.). 2001. *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*. Oxford.

Macleod, C.W. 1983. "Thucydides and Tragedy." In Macleod, *Collected Essays*, 140–58. Oxford.

Marincola, J. (ed.). 2012. *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras: History without Historians*. Edinburgh.

Martin, R. 1989. *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the Iliad*. Ithaca NY.

Missiou, A. 1992. *The Subversive Oratory of Andokides: Politics, Ideology and Decision-Making in Democratic Athens*. Cambridge.

Moles, J. 1996. "Herodotus Warns the Athenians." *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 9: 259–84.

Möller, A. 1996. "Der Stammbaum der Philaiden." In M. Flashar (ed.), *Retrospektive. Konzepte von Vergangenheit in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, 17–35. Munich.

Morris, I. 1988. "Tomb Cult and the 'Greek Renaissance': The Past in the Present in the 8th Century BC." *Antiquity* 62: 750–61.

Morrison, J.V. 2004. "Memory, Time, and Writing: Oral and Literary Aspects of Thucydides' *History*." In J.C. Mackie (ed.), *Oral Performance and its Context*, 95–116. Leiden.

Most, G.W. 1997. "Hesiod's Myth of Five (or Three or Four) Races." *PCPhS* 43: 104–27.

Murray, O. 1987. "Herodotus and Oral History." In H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds .), *Achaemenid History*, II: *The Greek Sources*, 93–115. Leiden.

Murray, O. (ed.). 1990. *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposion*. Oxford.

Nagy, G. 1979. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Poetry*. Baltimore. Rev. edn. 1999.

Nagy, G. 1996. *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*. Cambridge.

Norlin, G. (ed., trans.). 1966. *Isocrates*, I. Cambridge, MA.

Nouhaud, M. 1982. *L'utilisation de l'histoire par les orateurs attiques*. Paris.

Obbink, D. 2006. "A New Archilochus Poem." *ZPE* 156: 1–9.

Ober, J. 1998. *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens. Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule*. Princeton.

Page, D.L. (ed.). 1981. *Further Greek Epigrams*. Cambridge.

Parke, H.W. 1977. *Festivals of the Athenians*. London.

Parry, A. (ed.). 1971. *The Making of Homeric Verse. The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*. Oxford.

Parsons, P. 1992. "3965: Simonides, Elegies." *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 59: 4–50.

Pauly, W., G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll (eds.). 1893–1980. *Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Multiple vols. Stuttgart and Munich.

Pearson, L. 1941. "Historical Allusions in the Attic Orators." *CPh* 36: 209–29.

Pelling, C. (ed.). 1997. *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*. Oxford.

Perlman, S. 1961. "The Historical Example: Its Use and Importance as Political Propaganda in the Attic Orators." *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 7: 150–66.

Pickard-Cambridge, A. 1968. *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*. Rev. by J. Gould and D.M. Lewis. Oxford.

Pucci, P. 1992. *Oedipus and the Fabrication of the Father: "Oedipus Tyrannus" in Modern Criticism and Philosophy*. Baltimore.

Raaflaub, K. 1987. "Herodotus, Political Thought, and the Meaning of History." In D. Boedeker (ed.), *Herodotus and the Invention of History*, 221–48. *Arethusa* 20.

Raaflaub, K. 1993. "Homer to Solon: The Rise of the Polis. The Written Sources." In M.H. Hansen (ed.), *The Ancient Greek City-State*, 41–105. Copenhagen.

Raaflaub, K. 2002. "Philosophy, Science, Politics: Herodotus and the Intellectual Trends of his Time." In E. Bakker, I. de Jong, and H. van Wees (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, 149–86. Leiden.

Raaflaub, K. 2010. "Ulterior Motives in Ancient Historiography. What exactly and Why?" In L. Foxhall, H.-J. Gehrke, and N. Luraghi (eds.), *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*, 189–210. Stuttgart.

Roisman, H.M. 2007. "Right Rhetoric in Homer." In I. Worthington (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Rhetoric*, 429–46. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Rutherford, I. 2001. "The New Simonides: Toward a Commentary." In Boedeker and Sider 2001: 33–54.

Schiappa, E. 1999. *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece*. New Haven.

Schmitt Pantel, P. 1992. *La cité au banquet. Histoire des repas publics dans les cités grecques*. Rome.

Schmitz-Kahlmann, G. 1939. *Das Beispiel der Geschichte im politischen Denken des Isokrates*. Leipzig.

Sider, D. 2006. "The New Simonides and the Question of Historical Elegy." *AJPh* 127: 327–346.

Slater, W.J. (ed.). 1991. *Dining in a Classical Context*. Ann Arbor.

Smitten, J.R., and A. Daghistany (eds.). 1981. *Spatial Form in Narrative*. Ithaca.

Snell, B. 1952. "Homer und die Entstehung des geschichtlichen Bewußtseins bei den Griechen." In *Varia Variorum. Festgabe für Karl Reinhardt*, 2–12. Münster.

Sommerstein, A.H., S. Halliwell, J.J. Henderson, and B. Zimmermann (eds.). 1993. *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis*. Bari.

Sourvinou-Inwood, C. 1989. "Assumptions and the Creation of Meaning: Reading Sophocles' *Antigone*." *JHS* 109: 134–48.

Stadter, P.A. 1992. "Herodotus and the Athenian Arche." *ASNP* III 22: 781–809.

Stahl, H.-P. 2003. *Thucydides: Man's Place in History*. Swansea.

Steinmetz, P. 1969. "Das Erwachen des geschichtlichen Bewußtseins in der Polis." In Steinmetz, *Politeia und Res Publica*, 52–78. Wiesbaden.

Strasburger, H. 1972. *Homer und die Geschichtsschreibung*. Heidelberg.

Taplin, O. 1999. "Spreading the Word through Performance." In S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (eds.), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, 33–57. Cambridge.

Thomas, R. 1989. *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*. Cambridge.

Thomas, R. 2000. *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion*. Cambridge.

Thomas, R. 2006. "The Intellectual Milieu of Herodotus." In C. Dewald and J. Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 60–75. Cambridge.

Turner, E.G. 1952. *Athenian Books in the 5th and 4th Centuries B.C.* London.

Ulf, C. (ed.). 2003. *Der neue Streit um Troja. Eine Bilanz*. Munich.

van Groningen, B.A. 1953. *In the Grip of the Past: Essay on an Aspect of Greek Thought*. Leiden.

Vansina, J. 1965. *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. Chicago.

Vernant, J.-P. 1960. "Le mythe hésiodique des races. Essai d'analyse structurale." *RHR* 157: 21–54.

Veyne, P. 1983. *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes? Essai sur l'imagination constituante*. Paris.

Weidauer, K. 1954. *Thukydides und die Hippokratischen Schriften. Der Einfluss der Medizin auf Zielsetzung und Darstellungsweise des Geschichtswerks*. Heidelberg.

West, M.L. 1974. *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*. Berlin.

West, M.L. (ed., comm.). 1978. *Hesiod, Works and Days*. Oxford.

West, M.L. 1992. *Iambi et Elegi Graeci Ante Alexandrum Cantati*. 2 vols. (II 2nd edn.). Oxford.

Winkler, J.J., and F.I. Zeitlin (eds.). 1990. *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context*. Princeton.

Worthington, I. 1994. "History and Oratorical Exploitation." In Worthington (ed.), *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, 109–29. London.

Yates, D. 2009. *Remembering the Persian War Differently*. Ph.D. dissertation Brown University.

Yunis, H. 1996. *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens*. Ithaca.

Zeitlin, F.I. 1990. "Thebes: Theater of Self and Society in Athenian Drama." In Winkler and Zeitlin 1990: 130–67.

13

How the Romans Remembered, Recorded, Thought About, and Used Their Past

Andreas Mehl

Scholarship on classical antiquity with its strong philological and literary tradition associates historical recording and memory very closely and sometimes absolutely with historiography.[1] Although this may be one-sided, it is impossible to write about the topic of the present volume, as far as it concerns the Romans, without dwelling much upon their historiography and some of its peculiarities.[2] My discussion is divided into three sections, moving from social and historical memory outside historiography to historiography proper; the last section, dealing with the very center of Roman historical thinking, is by far the longest.

Social Contexts: Historical Memories and Records outside Historiography

In an admittedly simplified view, Roman society was always divided into two groups: in early times the patricians and plebeians, in the republic and early principate the nobility as the ruling class and the plebeians as the mass of citizens, and in the later Roman empire the *honestiores* and *humiliores*, the men and women of honor (high status) and the ordinary people. In each of the three periods, historical *recording* was nearly absolutely a concern only of the first group. So the patrician, noble, and honorable men made history in a double sense: being politicians, administrators, and generals, they were active in those events that formed the material of Roman history – and they recorded these events and with them the

personal achievements of leading Romans. Some Romans not belonging to the first group – as, for example, in Augustus's time the poets Propertius or Ovid – might judge some events of contemporary history in a way that contrasted with the official point of view held by Augustus and his inner circle. However, Romans who did not belong to the upper classes of senators or at least knights (*equites*, equestrians), who cared about the historical record, did not form an independent and identifiable group, as far as we know them at all, and, in any case, were not generally opposed to the representation and interpretation of history offered by senators and knights.

How, then, did the upper classes "manage" historical records? For many generations, the patricians and nobles fixed and preserved knowledge of their own public achievements and experiences and of events that had happened before their own time by a mixture of oral, written, pictorial, and performative devices – and historiography was *not* among them.[3] It seems ironical that the best and most complete evidence for some of these practices survives precisely in historiography, in the work of the Greek historian of Rome's rise to world power, Polybius (6.53–54). I list here the three most important situations and types of historical recording. That they are all connected with death is not surprising, since remembrance of a person in general begins at the moment of his or her death:[4]

1. The funeral offered two opportunities for memory and recording. One was the funeral oration that was not limited to praising the deceased man or woman but could also refer to members of the family who had died earlier. The other was the funeral procession (*pompa funebris*) in which many dead family members were represented by slaves wearing their death masks and garments with the insignia of office.

2. A death mask was made of a deceased patrician or noble man, and placed in the atrium of his home together with a *titulus*, a short inscription with his name, public offices and priesthoods, and perhaps outstanding achievements. This part of the house was accessible not only to family members but also to others, especially the family's clients.

3. In the family tomb a similar or identical inscription was written on the urn containing the deceased person's ashes or on his sarcophagus; several early sarcophagi of one of the most famous Roman clans, the *Cornelii Scipiones*, offer splendid examples. The same or a similar text was often displayed also on the outer walls of the tomb or on a stela erected in front of it. Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans buried their dead outside their towns, especially along the roads leading to the countryside and other towns, and they wanted people passing on the road to remember and mourn the dead. Hence inscriptions and perhaps also statues of the dead had to be visible outside the tomb; again, examples are not lacking (including the bronze pillars inscribed with Augustus's own report of his achievements, *Res gestae*, in front of his family's mausoleum on the Campus Martius).

After only a few generations, such individual recordings were able to produce oral family histories within the frame of and with significance for the civic community of Rome. Of course, neither a single family history nor an accumulation of some or all of them could produce a history of Rome, because they all remained focused on single families. But family histories could be used to write Rome's history – and from this perspective they could also prove problematic. For example, a family might have felt obliged to improve the reputation of an ancestor who had died young, or had been absolutely unimportant in a long life, or had even been the family's black sheep. There is evidence that such "improvement" took place but suspicion that this might have happened on a large scale can be countered by the fact that the historical traditions and claims of every family could be checked by the knowledge harbored by other patrician and noble families and, in addition, by the memories of all other Roman citizens, as far as they took part in public and political life, including service in the army. As clients they visited their patrons in the atria of the noble houses and saw there the inscriptions next to the death masks; they participated *en masse* in the funerals and, like everybody else, they passed by the tombs, looked at the statues, and read the funeral inscriptions along the roads. Since both groups were recipients of the historical records produced by the ruling class, they exerted twofold social control over the truth of Roman family histories.

Yet Roman historical memory was not exclusively founded on family traditions. The civic community itself and its representatives had opportunities to remind its members, the citizens of Rome, of historical events, and they did so in various ways. The chronicles or *fasti* written by the chief priest, the *pontifex maximus* (always a citizen of patrician rank), will have supplied some material, although apparently it was rather meager and concentrated on events of religious importance for the community that needed expiation.[5] Therefore only their chronological order will be discussed here. Of much more interest are memorial places and monuments, among them *tabulae pictae*, paintings especially of battles and memorable deeds of famous persons shown in public buildings. It is uncertain when this habit began; it is firmly attested from the early third century BCE. Anyhow, the Romans soon became specialists in representing historical events by means of painted, engraved, or sculpted images, often combined with a short written comment. And in all antiquity there was no state that matched late-republican and imperial Rome in the intensity with which political ideas, programs, and achievements were communicated to the public through coins featuring both purposefully selected images and short legends.[6]

In ancient city states, the civic community was responsible for the cults of the gods, and the priests usually were citizens. The communal calendar, regulating both civic and religious life, marked specific days in the course of the year that were of religious as well as political importance and reminded the citizens of historical events. For example, the 18th of July was devoted to the memory of a disastrous Roman defeat against an army of Gauls near Rome on the banks of the small river Allia in the early fourth century BCE. Over time, the number of days commemorating bad and good historical experiences increased considerably. Under the emperors, beginning with

Augustus, days relating to the personal lives and achievements of emperors, empresses, and princes were added. Most of those personal memorial days were abolished after the death of the person concerned, but some of them were retained for a shorter or longer time and so had a chance to enter into historical memory.[7] Moreover, all people, even slaves, could see the historical monuments and be aware of the days and feasts of historical significance, and this was not limited to the city of Rome: wherever in the empire a public monument existed, pieces of Roman history could be learned and remembered.

From the late third century BCE and through the empire, historiography was used as the main medium to record the past; nonetheless, the traditional devices for preserving and recording historical memory, the purposes and advantages of which differed from those of historiography, did not become obsolete. Under the new political and social conditions of the empire, however, the methods of historical remembrance and recording underwent changes, though different means were affected to different degrees. These changes were caused by the position of the emperor who was elevated above all others, and by his role as the patron of all. Public funerals as well as other public honors for senators, such as the triumph, henceforth depended on the emperor's permission; the senators' contacts with the assembled citizens were reduced to a minimum or even suppressed because the emperor alone claimed responsibility for their welfare; public monuments in the city of Rome were planned and designed by the emperor's government, and elsewhere in the empire their erection was subject to the provincial governor's accountability to the emperor. Hence the possibilities to influence public opinion, especially through coinage and the arts, and with them the formation of public memory – at least of the recent past – were monopolized by the emperor.[8] But what happened to historiography?

Social Milieu, Subject Matter, and Focus of Roman Historiography

Like the other devices of historical recording, historiography was in the hands of the Roman nobles: the "makers of history" also wrote it. Since it was an activity limited to the private sphere, it was affected less than public historical remembrance and recording by the changes that state and society underwent under the empire – although, as the historian Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 53.19) tells us in very clear words, from the time of Augustus the imperial government's monopolization of information about what happened now decisively hampered everybody's knowledge, including that of all those who wrote on Roman history.[9] Admittedly, emperors could order histories to be burned and their authors to be prosecuted and even driven to death, as happened, for example, to Cremutius Cordus under Tiberius (Tacitus, *Annals* 4.34–35), and at least some emperors were interested in being portrayed by historians or history-writing masters of rhetoric, as was Lucius Verus by the rhetorician Fronto for his successful campaign against the Parthians

in166 CE. In general, though, historiography was not the concern of the emperor and his entourage. Hence it was the Roman nobles who continued through late antiquity to write history.[10]

To do so, however, was no longer their monopoly. Pure *homines literati* (specialists writing literature) too now wrote books on Roman history. The first was Livy in the time of Augustus, another the Fronto just mentioned. Such authors needed the help of men with political experience, that is, of members of senatorial families, or even, as was the case with Livy, of the imperial family – and such help would leave its mark in their work. In Fronto's "Principia historica" the evidence for such reliance on others' knowledge is obvious. Livy's case is more complicated. On the one hand, it is clear enough that he was not familiar with the workings of Roman republican politics. On the other hand, although the books of his monumental *Roman History* covering the sensitive time of the civil wars and the Augustan decades up to the year 9 BCE (book 142: Livy's last book) are not preserved, there is indirect evidence, and it tells another story that does not allow a simple conclusion. When the young "prince" Claudius (the later emperor) began to write a history of the events that followed upon the murder of Julius Caesar, he was soon severely rebuked by his mother Antonia and his grandmother Livia, Augustus's influential wife and then widow.[11] In consequence, Claudius, "realizing that he would not have the opportunity to write in a free and true way" about those events, abandoned this project and chose the apparently less problematic period beginning with the peace after the end of the civil wars (Suetonius, *Claudius* 41). As, according to Suetonius, Livy was Claudius's teacher in writing history, Livy too may or even must have been affected by this obstacle to writing Roman history and, in consequence, his own historical judgments cannot have been completely identical with those of the inner circle of power in early imperial Rome. However, although Livy and Augustus had different views on at least two persons of central importance in the late civil wars, Pompey and Caesar, we are told that this did not destroy or even diminish their close contact and friendship.[12]

From its beginning, Roman history, written by senators and magistrates involved in public affairs, although still embedded in family traditions, overcame the limited point of view of any one family or clan and so really was the history of Rome. Indeed, all these authors wrote from a distinct point of view: that of the senator and magistrate. Scholars today thus speak of "senatorial historiography." Roman history written by Roman nobles focused on Rome's government and foreign policy: on decisions and actions that were understood as the result of the knowledge and virtues of men defined by their social and political status, and of the sum of experience concentrated in the collectivity of the Roman senate. Although there was room for recording individual achievements, it was also possible to remove individual traits from history entirely and represent a historical actor only as a magistrate, soldier, or citizen. Precisely this was Cato the Elder's way of dealing with Roman history in the first half of the second century BCE, when he omitted all personal names in his *Origins* and so wrote a completely and deliberately depersonalized history of Rome.[13] Although Cato remained an exception, his extreme position defines a characteristic of Roman historiography: the Roman republican historian understood himself not

as a *scriptor personarum* focusing on persons and their achievements (in an extreme case writing a biography), but as a *scriptor rerum (gestarum)*, the author of a narrative about "deeds" or "affairs," that is, events, actions, and interactions of states.[14]

Despite the poor information they supply for political history, the inscribed *fasti*, mentioned earlier, will have helped the Romans understand their history as a succession of events and actions.[15] In short notices on the *tabula* (the whitened board) maintained by the *pontifex maximus* (supreme priest), events and actions were listed together with titles and names of the magistrates responsible for the actions (Chassignet 1996: XXIII–XLII, 1–15). Each year, dated by the eponymous magistrates, was separated from the next, and within a year the notices followed one another according to the succession of events and actions. Hence not only the sequential narrative of events and actions but also the annalistic scheme, so typical of Roman historiography, must have been influenced not only by the political practice of annual magistracies but also and even more by the *fasti*.[16]

The annalistic scheme with all its advantages and deficiencies – especially the need to attribute events and achievements unambiguously to the magistrates of a given year, and to divide into several portions developments that extended over more than one year or could not be dated to a precise year – was used through many centuries. Nevertheless it was complemented and finally superseded by another pattern. Under the emperors historical thinking shifted from concentrating on events and actions narrated in chronological order to an increasingly biographical way of presenting the history of the Romans and their empire. Roman history thus became the history of the emperors and their families. This change did not happen because Roman emperors gave orders to write biographical history that concentrated on themselves and their families, but because the very existence and predominance of the emperors made it almost inevitable to write history with a focus on the rulers or even in the form of their biographies. Extant Roman imperial historiography illustrates this development. Tacitus's *Histories* and *Annals* still follow the annalistic pattern, but the emperor is nearly omnipresent and each consular year begins with a detailed report on events involving the emperor and his court. Later times, totally accustomed to thinking of Roman history as the history of emperors, saw in Tacitus's descriptions of the history of the early principate no longer annalistic accounts or a combination of these with biographical elements, but only biographies of the emperors; conversely and logically, they perceived the biographer Suetonius as a historian (Hieronymus, *Commentarius ad Zachariam* 3.14 and *Chronicon*, Prologue p. 6 Helm). In accordance with this specific understanding, some authors (not least those collected in the *Scriptores historiae Augustae*), following upon the model of Suetonius, wrote the history of the imperial period as a series of biographies of the emperors.

In writing the history of republican Rome, senators narrated both internal events and external affairs. They began writing history near the end of the third century BCE, during the Second Punic War, when Hannibal's military and diplomatic skills, combined with Roman strategic and tactical mistakes, brought Rome to near-defeat.[17] At the time, the Mediterranean area was like a theater in which the spectators, many

of them Greeks or speakers of the Greek language, watched with fascination the drama enacted by Romans and Carthaginians. This exceptional situation prompted the emergence of historical works written by Roman nobles who at that time were already imbued with Greek culture and able to use the Greek language for writing literature. Their works were intended to be read by Greeks (of nationality or language) and to explain to them Rome's nature, history, and policies in the war against Carthage. Hence Rome's first two historical accounts, those of Quintus Fabius Pictor and Lucius Cincius Alimentus, were written in Greek.

But in offering an account of Roman history that covered not only the Second Punic War but also the preceding period, the First Punic War, and Rome's development from its beginnings, both authors must have addressed their Roman compatriots as well, more precisely their fellow senators who were used to the Greek language and literature. Even so, parts of Rome's earlier history, especially that of its foundation and prehistory, must have appealed to Greeks no less than Romans. From the fifth century BCE, this mythical story had already been recorded and developed step by step by Greek historians. When it was fully developed, it made the founder of Rome a descendant not only of men but also of two gods, and the Romans not only descendants of Trojans but also of Greeks who had settled in Latium and even on the very ground occupied later by the city of Rome. During Rome's difficult fight for survival in the Second Punic War, this story of her beginnings could – and was intended to – serve as an argument supporting the claim, directed to the Greek world, that Rome was Greek and that, therefore, when Rome was attacked by Carthage, Greeks were attacked by non-Greeks – an argument countering Hannibal's effort to win over the Greek world with the help of Greek authors writing for him and presenting his point of view. Hence the history of Rome's beginnings, as told by Rome's first two historians, was not antiquarian at all, but part of the present with the purpose of helping Rome overcome her serious troubles.

This particular beginning of Roman historiography had consequences. The third Roman historian, Cato the Elder, although the first to use the Latin language and so refusing to write for Greeks (who in general spoke, wrote, and read only their own language), nevertheless diligently told the protohistory of Rome in detail and with all its Greek embellishments. His *Origines*, at the latest, firmly established the prologue of Roman history, that is, the long prehistory resulting in Rome's foundation, as an indisputable part of the Romans' historical self-understanding and self-presentation. Thus later Roman historians felt compelled either to write the history "from the beginning of the city of Rome" (*ab urbe condita*) themselves, as Livy did, or to continue an already existing Roman history, in which another author had dealt with the beginnings of Rome. The least a Roman historian would feel obliged to do was what Tacitus did in the first chapter of his *Annals*, to summarize in a few phrases the early history of Rome: "In the beginning kings held Rome."[18] Even the author of a historical monograph, recounting a special event or combination of events within a short interval of time, might consider it necessary to go back to the roots of Rome, as Sallust did in his *Catilinarian Conspiracy* (ch. 6).

In tracing Rome's history from the foundation of their city and even from a time before it existed, Roman historians again followed a Greek pattern that was observed prominently in a specific genre of their historiography (Timpe 2006a, 2006b). The topic of this genre was not the large-scale history of states, but regional and local history, especially of southern Italy with its Greek colonies. In this particular historical genre, central Italy and even Rome were included already by its first author, Antiochus of Syracuse in the time of Herodotus. An indispensable part of these Greek local and regional histories was the foundation of a town or tribe by a hero who gave it his name. Another typical feature was the inclusion of so-called *thaumasia* or *mirabilia* ("wondrous, miraculous events"). All this can be found even in Cato's *Origines*, despite his sober mentality and fierce criticism of the Greeks. As a result, Roman history written by Romans was narrated in ways that resembled Greek local and regional histories.

Indeed, like these Greek local histories, Roman history, too, in its beginning was that of a town, with a local or at most regional horizon. And Roman history remained the history of the city of Rome. Although in the time from the first Roman historians to Cato's death Rome achieved supremacy over most of the Mediterranean, and during subsequent generations the Mediterranean was increasingly unified in the emerging Roman empire, in the Romans' political and historical perspective the world continued to be viewed exclusively from the city of Rome and to be divided into Rome and the rest (Timpe 2006a). As even Tacitus shows, in the annalistic pattern each annual account begins with the Roman magistrates (or later emperors) and events in the city of Rome and ends with the provinces and frontier regions, and in wandering from the *urbs* to the ends of the world the author's fullness and engagement decreases step by step. Even in late antiquity, when the city of Rome had lost all its political significance, Roman citizenship, now widespread, and the idea of Roman rule were still tied to the city of Rome and not to the empire (Paschoud 1967).

Examples, Persons, and Learning from the Past

Cicero's well-known phrase, *historia magistra vitae*, "History is a teacher for life" (*On the Orator* 2.36), can be interpreted in different ways but to an educated Roman it had a distinct meaning: history connects past and present not simply by informing readers about the past, prompted by a vague sense that history might in general ways be useful for them, but more precisely by supplying examples of behavior that can be applied in situations thought to be equal or similar to historical ones.[19] So Livy writes in his *Ab urbe condita*: "What chiefly makes the study of history (*res*) wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience (*exemplum*) set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result" (pref. 10–11). With these words, to which he immediately adds that

"no state … was richer in good examples [than Rome]," Livy assigns a prominent place to the concept of history as a supplier of examples or, more precisely, of moral examples.[20] Even more, he places the text quoted here in the introduction to his work, where he deals with general issues; he thus gives this idea programmatic significance. While this may be unique to Livy, it was quite normal for Roman historians to stress the importance of history as offering examples for later times. I will comment only briefly here on historical holidays and historical monuments, two frequent devices for preserving historical memory (as discussed above in the first section of this chapter). Since these are connected with single events, they are not useful for the representation of a historical continuum but they can be and, indeed, were used for telling historical examples. Hence the concept of *exemplum* itself and its continuous use must be regarded as typically Roman.[21]

This last remark is to be understood in two different ways. First, every Roman historian seems to have used the past for the purpose of educating his readers through examples. At least, from Cato in the first half of the second century BCE far into the Roman empire one cannot find an author who does not give examples in his history. Second, the phenomenon of the historian who teaches his readers by means of historical examples seems to be nearly exclusively Roman. This observation requires a brief look at Greek historiography and rhetoric. Thucydides was convinced that his history of the Peloponnesian War as a whole would be "a possession for all time" (1.22) – in other words, that it would be useful to readers at any time in the future. Xenophon, the first continuator of Thucydides, elaborated in his *Hellenica* (*Greek History*) scenes of exemplary behavior and actions and thus indeed offered examples. While Thucydides' remark on the quality of his history as a tool to teach later generations refers generally to past and future political situations but not to moral examples, Xenophon reports examples of individual virtue and vice and comes near to Livy's concept (Meister 1990: 74). Even so, Xenophon had only few successors in Greek historiography and did not set a general trend. Of course, one will find historical examples in Greek literature outside historiography: Greek rhetoric used them, but not in the way Roman historiography and rhetoric did, that is, not as a firm prescription for moral behavior which one might follow or not but which was not open to discussion.

The preceding remarks already shed some light on typical Roman uses of historical examples. It is now necessary to explore the characteristics of such usage more closely and to define the conditions of the application of such examples. This will help us understand a central aspect of Roman historical thinking. In Rome historical examples certainly were used long before the emergence of historiography, and they were never monopolized by the latter but continued to be of importance in other genres of literature and in the fine arts. Nonetheless, insofar as the Romans thought of history almost as a sequence of examples, their historiography supplies the richest and best evidence for them. Historical *exempla* were considered to be useful particularly in the public sphere, serving the public interest. It requires explanation, therefore, that such examples focus on the behavior of individual men and women and that they are written for individuals who are supposed to read and

imitate them. The answer is that exemplary behavior that has proved communally beneficial, and all later actions of individuals emulating this example have the effect of integrating the individuals into their society and state: a Roman following the positive example of – of course – another Roman proves to be a true Roman, and his action can serve as an example for future generations to cope successfully with the same type of challenge.

Every historical example represents an action in a given situation or, rather, a reaction to this situation. Both the situation and the reaction to it are then categorized so that later situations and actions can be assimilated to them. Only this process of categorization turns a unique event into an example. To a Roman the transition from an individual case to a category of cases was not strange at all: theory and practice of Roman law with its well-known casuistic method worked precisely in the same way. But whereas the casuistic method caused no difficulties in jurisprudence, the historian might have problems with it, and Roman historians experienced this at the latest in the principate, when political action was no longer concentrated in the collectivities of the senate and popular assemblies but in the imperial court. When historical events are described by means of *exempla*, the acting persons, their actions, and the situations in which they act form literary and logical units within the historian's story, while consistency with other parts of the narrative and especially with other actions of the same person is not required. Hence the same person's behavior may be regarded as good in one situation but bad in another. Consistency in the depiction of persons was not needed in Rome as long as the ruling persons, the magistrates, changed from year to year. But this began to change in the late republic and became definitely different in the time of the emperors. If the same person was the subject of a story over a longer time, the simple characterization of any deed as good or bad might destroy the unity of the person's character.

The consequences are visible in Tacitus's *Annals* and *Histories*. Tacitus – and perhaps already his predecessors among the historians of the early principate – described their protagonists and especially the emperors as fixed characters, even as character types: the cruel and sly Tiberius or the cruel but stupid Claudius. Nonetheless, when Claudius proposes in the senate to give noble Gauls, already Roman citizens, the chance of becoming senators, Tacitus makes him speak and act in the manner of a really great ruler:[22] in a matter the historian regards most important, in which in his view the emperor argues for a decision that is good and necessary, he presents Claudius as a positive example – in stark contrast to the imbecile he usually appears to be in Roman historiography and historical biography. That Claudius here is shown as a model emperor astonishes all the more since the parts of his original speech that are preserved epigraphically reflect not only his historical erudition but also a significant lack of consistent argumentation and thus precisely a facet of this emperor's usual behavior that brought him into disrepute as being foolish.

When confronted with a conflict between retaining the consistency of a person's character and adapting a person's action to a given situation so that it could become an *exemplum*, Roman historians usually decided in favor of the latter.

They continued to do so no less when historiography had evolved into the history (or even a series of biographies) of the ruling persons. Even Suetonius's literary biographies of emperors adopt the principle of dividing an emperor's deeds into good and bad ones, and thus demonstrate that consistency was not the ultimate purpose in the description of persons. Hence a Roman historian could feel free to shape a person's action into an example without much regard to the person's character he himself may have depicted elsewhere in his work.

Since a Roman was expected to imitate a suitable historical example whenever he was confronted with a specific challenge, his moral and intellectual duty was to know as many historical examples as possible so as to be able always to choose an appropriate one. Hence he needed historical knowledge. Not the only, but the most efficient way to acquire such knowledge was to read the works of – of course, Roman – historians that offered plenty of examples. The obligation to supply fellow citizens – especially fellow senators – with historical examples elevated the historian's task above that of a private enterprise and turned it into a public service and achievement for the state. This was extremely important because the Roman republican concept of the contrast between *otium* (leisure) and *negotium* (nonleisure), that is, between private life and leisure on one side and, on the other, life in public and for the state, connected any literary activity with *otium* and thus with leisure and the amenities of the private sphere but not with *negotium* and activity serving the community. When Cicero some years after his consulate in 63 BCE began to propagate *otium cum dignitate* (a life of leisure befitting a person's status), one of his objectives was to persuade the ruling class, the senators, that reading and writing could be useful communal activities.[23] Of course, not every type of literature met this condition but according to Cicero's own literary and intellectual interests at the time philosophy did, especially when it focused on ethics and politics. Moreover, Cicero's remarks on historiography show that history, too, could grant an *otium cum dignitate* (Fleck 1993; Fox 2007). Nonetheless, about two decades later Sallust felt obliged in the introductions of his two historical monographs to apologize for having abandoned politics and turned to writing history, and to explain that the latter was not inferior to the former (*Jugurthine War* 1–4; *Catilinarian Conspiracy* 3–4). Another decade later, Livy's statement (quoted above) about the moral value of historical knowledge (also made in the introduction to the work) is not apologetic at all but a praising of historiography. As his words show, the reason for his pride is the general acceptance of examples: historiography as a supplier, even the best supplier, of *exempla* justifies writing history as an activity worthy of a Roman citizen. This, however, does not reflect a general development; rather, differences in their personal lives and conditions may explain both Sallust's insecurity and Livy's self-confidence.[24]

As said above, literature and especially historiography were not the only genres to provide examples of virtues and vices: monuments and images too could serve that purpose. Yet language was the best or even only medium to express an abstract idea underlying a specific behavior or deed, and among various literary genres historiography focused uniquely on recounting the past through a sequence of examples

spanning the centuries and so on educating its readers. But what about rhetoric? Did it not rely on the same method of utilizing examples to convince the audience? And did a young Roman who later in his life might perhaps write history himself not learn history primarily as part of his study of rhetoric? Both are true, but neither affects the unique capacity of historiography to transmit history by means of *exempla*. In fact, according to Cicero, early Roman historiography up to his own time exhibited no literary qualities at all.[25] Since schools of rhetoric focused precisely on stylistic perfection, this eliminates the possibility that the qualities that are crucial in our context were learned there. Besides, Greek rhetoric was not taught in Rome before the second century BCE and Latin schools of rhetoric did not exist before the beginning of the first century; hence Roman historians until that time either did not learn rhetoric at all or they learned only Greek rhetoric which of course offered training in the method of convincing by means of historical examples but generally did not use examples in the very direct and moralistic way typical of Roman thinking.[26] The emergence of Latin rhetoric more than a century after that of Roman historiography had the consequence that one of the most typical genres of Roman literature, the collection of historical examples to be used in rhetoric, exploited the source material easily available in the already existing works of Roman historians, not vice versa.[27] Of course, later on Roman historians will, or even must, have been influenced in their thinking by their study of rhetoric in which they learned not least how to use historical examples, but orators and teachers of rhetoric continued to look for examples not only in speeches and rhetorical manuals, but also in works of history.[28]

Livy's statement, quoted above and confirmed by the large number of *exempla* given in many other texts of Roman historiography, makes clear that Roman examples convey moral values. Although they concern individual behavior, they are based not on individualist but collective ethics. Thus in Roman society there must have existed a set of moral rules that were enforced either by laws or social consensus. This too is confirmed by much evidence: it was called *mos maiorum* (the customs and moral values of the ancestors) and thought to remain the same for all time.[29] Nonetheless, life's experience taught that situations of a new type could emerge and that, in consequence, new ways of acting and behaving were needed – which themselves could and would become examples and so be included in the *mos maiorum*.[30] Even so, overall the mentality behind *mos* was strictly conservative. This is true, too, of the historian who describes actions of the past as examples for later generations.[31] The peculiar conservatism of moral values means that past and present are essentially the same. In consequence, there is a tendency to deny that any change or development occurs in the course of time – with one remarkable exception: moral decline is admitted as a possibility, as the Romans thought it occurred in the century of the Roman civil wars (133 – circa 30 BCE), described most vividly by Sallust, the ultimate Roman author representing a pessimistic point of view. Yet in Roman thinking moral decline can and must be opposed by everyone. The weapon against moral decline is offered precisely by *exempla* known from a time when things were still in order, that is, examples of the past, even of a remote past. Hence historiography is believed to be able to help through its examples not only to maintain the established moral order

but also to restore an old and good moral order that has been threatened or even lost. Exactly this was part of Augustus's program of restoration as he himself formulated it in his famous *Res gestae*, and this program was twofold in the sense explained above: "By means of new laws which I arranged to be introduced (in the senate), I restored many examples of our ancestors which were fading away from our life, and I myself set examples in many respects to be imitated by later generations."[32] The same idea, though mixed with a good portion of skepticism about the possibility of restoring Rome's morals, was in Livy's mind some decades before the publication of the *Res gestae*, when he began writing his Roman history, and it was upmost in the thinking of Vergil and some other – but not all – authors of the time as well.[33]

The firm belief in the unchangeable permanence of moral values obscured and prevented recognition of the real changes that especially the Roman conquests, empire, and, most of all, the civil wars brought about. The historiography of Augustus's time and the early principate was at least partly successful in denying such changes. The question is inevitable, though, whether there were at any time developments in Rome that indeed provoked fundamental changes in moral values or even deleted the established moral system and replaced it by a new one, so that either a complete set of new examples was needed or moral historical examples were no longer used at all. Such a change should have been caused by the Christian belief system and especially its rise to Rome's imperial religion. The reality, however, was more complex – as well as more conservative. As has been argued recently, the perhaps most important teacher of the (Western) Church in the later fourth century CE, Ambrose, bishop of Milan, continued to rely on the principle of moral education through historical *exempla*, but he used examples that differed from the traditional Roman ones. Instead of Roman politicians and generals of a remote past, he invoked the kings of ancient Israel.[34] On the other hand, in the early fifth century the author of the first Christian world history (the *Historiae adversus paganos*), Paulus Orosius, who was confronted with the heavy political and military losses of the western part of the Roman Empire and, even more, the sack of Rome by the Visigoths, used historical examples in a different way. He saw human life in general as a sequence of misfortune and misery caused by the sins of men and God's subsequent punishment. But he also believed that the time of paganism was hit much more by such misery than that since the birth of Jesus Christ when the whole world by the will of God had become part of the Roman Empire. Because the Roman emperors and many of their subjects had converted to Christianity, the Empire, in Orosius's view still the only true world empire, was granted an undisturbed future. In order to contrast the ancient and bad pagan past of the world and especially of Rome with the more recent and altogether good Christian past, present, and future, Orosius plundered *exempla* from pagan historiography – but he selected only negative examples to demonstrate the wickedness of the pagan past. Especially by exploiting Sallust, the pessimist who offered an explicit concept of Rome's moral decline, Orosius – and in the same way Augustine in *The City of God* – did not change the value judgments inherent in the examples they chose; rather, they integrated the negative moral connotation of the examples in their

pagan source directly into their system of Christian values.[35] As a result, even the qualitative change the Christian religion brought about in the Roman West did not put an end to the Roman way of understanding history as a set of moral examples representing key values. Hence, indeed, the use of moral examples taken from the past is the most continuous and persistent component of Roman historical thinking: to the Romans history is example – and example is authority.[36]

Summary and Conclusion

The Romans recorded and remembered their past by different means; historiography became one of them but late and under foreign (Greek) influence. Nonetheless, historiography was the most important tool for expressing historical thinking. The recording and remembrance of history were deeply influenced by social conventions and political power. Yet the intensity of that influence depended not only on prevailing social and political conditions but also on the means and forms of historical recording and memory themselves. Influenced by a special genre of Greek historiography, Roman historians in the time of Rome's expansion in the Mediterranean described their history by following the pattern of local histories that paid special attention to a town's or tribe's foundation by a demigod or god and to miracle stories. Even when Rome's history had *de facto* become world history, its historiography remained focused on the city of Rome and emancipated itself only partly from the scheme of Greek local historiography. In their historiography the Romans used the annalistic scheme to which they were accustomed by the political organization of their republic as well as the short lists of events written by their chief priests. The political changes brought about by the principate and empire caused a shift towards an increasingly or even completely biographical scheme.

Although Roman history is political history, in judging the behavior of historical actors the Romans did not apply political standards but moral rules. From its beginning, they saw history as a series of moral examples that later generations were supposed to imitate (if good) or avoid (if bad) in corresponding situations. Situations in which one needed the guidance of a historical example were thought to emerge potentially anywhere and at any time. The Romans were interested in the past, not because they regarded it as being different from the present but, on the contrary, because they considered both qualitatively equal. The only development they perceived was that of moral decline that could be fought precisely by relying on examples of a better past. Even Christian authors in the Roman West, though in specific ways defined by their Christian beliefs, maintained this long tradition of historical thinking through examples from the past.

However, to reduce Roman history, as it was described by Roman historians, to a set of moral examples and nothing more would not do justice to it. Like the Greeks, the Romans regarded history as a continuous stream of events (*historia continua*); moreover, they secured continuity of history by continuing the works of earlier historians.[37] This prevented Roman historians from writing history as a mere

collection of examples and from tearing the flow of history into pieces by telling only those events and deeds that were especially capable of serving as examples. When one reads longer passages, for example, of Livy or Tacitus, one will see that history was for them – and for other Roman historians as well – a continuity of events, in which those events that served as *exempla* had the role of highlights (*lumina*). Moreover, Romans – admittedly less than Greeks but nonetheless to a considerable extent – expected from history not only moral insights conveyed by individual examples, but also general *political* insights that could not be taught by any *exemplum*.

Hence, to offer an illustration, the real lesson to be learned from Claudius's speech in Tacitus (quoted above) is not that Claudius acts here as an exemplary ruler but that an empire can be established and run successfully over a long period of time only by integrating – in correlation with the growth of the empire – an increasing number of subjects into the body of citizens and even raising some of them to the ruling class. The focus on *exempla*, even of a simple type, did thus not prevent a Roman historian from gaining deeper historical understanding, creating arguments, even if implicitly, by presenting a series of analogous events stretching over a long period of time, and thus interpreting history on a more abstract level.[38] Despite its strong tendency to emphasize personalized and moralistic examples, Roman historiography therefore was much more than a mere collection of *exempla*.

Notes

1   Walter 2004 deals in detail with historical recording and memory both within and outside historiography, emphasizing, against the archaeological perspective of Hölscher 2001, that historiography is much more than a "secondary branch of historical memory" (212–20). See also Beck and Walter 2001: 47–50. My chapter owes much to Kurt Raaflaub's friendly and patient assistance.
2   On Roman historiography, see Flach 1998; Mehl 2005, 2011 and, among many good introductions and companions in English, esp. Mellor 1999; Marincola 2007. Kraus and Woodman 1997 focus on a selection of Latin historians from Sallust to Tacitus.
3   Walter 2004: 84–211 absorbs and cites the rich scholarship of the last decades on all these means of preserving historical memory, and reinterprets and accentuates their functions.
4   For the following points and an evaluation of their importance for historical remembrance, see Walter 2004: 84–130.
5   Therefore Cato, *Origines* fr. 4.1 (Chassignet 1986: 34; Beck and Walter 2001: 196–97) criticizes the *fasti*. See Rüpke 1995; Flach 1998: 57–59; Mehl 2011: 37–39.
6   Walter 2004: 131–54. With Walter, 155–95, one needs to add "imagined places of memory" (155).
7   For the Roman republic, see Walter 2004: 196–207; for the early empire, Behrwald 2009.
8   Andreae 1999. Augustus's self-presentation and his monopolization of public information were two sides of the same coin; see, with different focuses, Kienast 1999: 261–307; Levick 2010: 202–87; Dahlheim 2010: 235–85, and immediately below.

9 With the remark that Roman historians from the time of Augustus no longer knew the Roman state, as if it now were an alien state (*inscitia rei publicae ut alienae*), Tacitus, *Histories* 1.1 succinctly offers a view resembling that of Cassius Dio. See immediately above and Flach 1998: 160–61; Levick 2010: 133–36; Mehl 2011: 123, 144, 153–54; for the historical background also Kienast 1999: 261–67.

10 Although some emperors – either before or during their rule – were active in writing literary works and especially commenting on their own lives or acts as emperors, Claudius seems to have been the only one to write works of historiography in the strict sense of the word. See Peter 1914/1906: 2.92–94, CXX–CXXIII (a new and augmented edition is long overdue and expected from a team led by T. J. Cornell); Mehl 2011: 133–35. Suetonius (*Claudius* 41–42) offers a synopsis of Claudius as a historian.

11 With the word *avia* (grandmother) Suetonius (*Claudius* 41) does not hint at Octavia, the mother of Claudius's mother Antonia, but at Livia, the mother of Claudius's father Drusus: Octavia had died already in 11/10 BCE, evidently before Claudius's birth in 10 BCE, whereas Livia died only in 29 CE. Hence Kienast 1999: 267 with n. 200 (suggesting Octavia) is wrong. Livy died in or about 17 CE; thus it was possible for him to be Claudius's teacher in history writing before Augustus's death and also for some time after that. One should be aware of the fact that Suetonius's remarks in this chapter, as usually in his biographies, are not arranged chronologically, and so they may confuse the reader. See Flach 1998: 179–84; Mehl 2011: 165–69.

12 For Claudius as a historian, see above n. 10; for Livy and Augustus, see Flach 1998: 140–41; Mehl 2011: 103. The source for the remark about Livy is Tacitus, *Annals* 4.34. See also Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones* 5.18.4. One should note that, according to Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 56.34, Augustus in his later years had a more differentiated judgment about Pompey and Caesar. Hence, it would seem that discussions about those two persons would have been possible between the historian and his *princeps*.

13 See the general remark in Cornelius Nepos, *Cato* 3.4 and, for an example, Cato, *Origines*, fr. 4.7a (Beck and Walter 2001: 200–3; Chassignet 1986: 36–38). The author quoting Cato, Aulus Gellius in *Noctes Atticae* 3.7.1–19, when introducing Cato's account, names its hero, but in Cato's report itself all individuals (the Carthaginian general, the Roman consul as commander, and the hero, a Roman tribune) have no names; they are mentioned exclusively by their ranks or titles. Only one historical person, who is mentioned for comparison (the Spartan king Leonidas who died in the battle of Thermopylae against the Persians), has a name. Gellius must have learned the tribune's name elsewhere.

14 In using the term *scriptor rerum* (the equivalent of *scriptor historiarum*) for historians whom Alexander the Great had in his entourage to describe his achievements, Cicero (*Pro Archia poeta* 24) hints at authors whom, indeed, modern scholars call not biographers but "Alexander historians." For these authors, see Meister 1990: 102–23. Introducing his narrative of the second Punic war, Livy (*Ab urbe condita* 21.1), writing during the transition from the republic to the empire, calls *scriptores rerum* all historians who – like Thucydides – write about the history of a war (war being the ultimate substance of *res*) and who extol their respective war as "the most worthy of being remembered." Although Livy stresses the importance of the Punic leader Hannibal for this war, in his view it is not a war waged by persons, but by "states and peoples" (*civitates gentesque*).

15 The value of the *fasti* as a source for history is intensely debated (see, e.g., Rüpke 1995) but this does not affect our observations.

16 Though Greek poleis too had annual magistrates, Greek authors did not write annalistic histories, not even Thucydides who used a peculiar scheme of successive summers and winters (with or without campaigns) to narrate the Peloponnesian war. Nor is there a hint that precise analogies to the Roman *fasti* existed among the Greeks.

17 On the beginning of Roman historiography, see Flach 1998: 56–79; Mehl 2011: 41–60. Kierdorf 2003: 9–17 seems unique in dating the beginning of Roman historiography a few decades earlier, after the end of the First Punic War. Greek public opinion and Greek culture among the Roman nobility after the First Punic War would hardly have differed much from those during the Second Punic War.

18 Tacitus, *Annals* 1.1: *Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere*. This is the first sentence of Tacitus's extremely condensed summary of Roman history before the death of Augustus in 14 CE, which is the point of departure for his own historical narrative.

19 My argument here agrees in many but not all facets with Walter 2004: 51–62, who dwells in detail on *exemplum* as a typical Roman means of connecting the present with the past.

20 Trans. of the Loeb edition: *Hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod vites. … nulla umquam res publica … bonis exemplis ditior fuit.* As Livy is our main witness for writing "exemplary history," his use of such examples has been studied intensively; see esp. Chaplin 2000.

21 Among older German scholarship about Roman value terms ("Wertbegriffe"), see Knoche 1934; among more recent works characteristically concentrating on the late republic with its rapid changes and the early principate with its fundamental political transformation, see Chaplin 2000; Oppermann 2000; Bücher 2006.

22 Tacitus, *Annals* 11.23–25, esp. 24. The original speech, preserved in an inscription at Lyons, is in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 11.1668, in *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 212, and in other epigraphical and documentary collections; an English translation is, for example, in Sherk 1988: 97–98 (no. 55). For a comparative analysis of both versions of Claudius's speech, see von Albrecht 1995: 164–89; Flach 1998: 230–40.

23 See Wirszubski 1954 with Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 98; *De oratore* 1.3; *Brutus* 8; *De officiis* 3.1.

24 Sallust was a member of the senatorial class but in his career had experienced troubles; after the murder of his patron, Caesar, the only way he could live in security seems to have been outside of politics, and so he resigned from the senatorial career (*cursus honorum*) before having reached its peak. Livy, on the other hand, was never active in politics, but he wrote his Roman history in close contact with the new ruling group of Augustus, his family, and his personal friends. While Sallust had to find a new field of activity and to gain acceptance among his contemporaries through this activity, Livy could be confident of enjoying the general support of the new rulers because his history with its mostly traditional moral values corresponded to the ideology of the Augustan restoration; on the latter, see, for example, Eck 2007: ch. 11.

25 Cicero, *De oratore* 2.51–64; *De legibus* 1.5–10; Woodman 1988: 76–101. On Cicero's ideal of "history with rhetoric, rhetoric with history," see Fox 2007: 111–48.

26 For the development of rhetoric in republican Rome, see, with different focus, Eisenhut 1994: 45–61, esp. 60–61; Fuhrmann 1995: 42–47, esp. 46–47. On rhetoric in the works of Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and in Cicero's ideas of how to write history, see Woodman 1988, who, however, does not dwell on *exempla*.

27   We know this genre only through the collection made by Valerius Maximus in the time of the emperor Tiberius (ed., trans. Shackleton Bailey 2000; see Bloomer 1992). As was usual in antiquity, he did not quote his sources systematically. So it is not possible to give a trustworthy catalogue of the authors and works used by him. Some of the material presented by him may even have been part of general popular knowledge that could not be attributed to any precise source.

28   Cicero's speeches are full of historical examples of different origin, while Quintilian in his textbook of rhetoric (*Institutio oratoria*) looks for stylistic (not historical) examples in the works of the historians Herodotus, Thucydides, Fabius Pictor, Livy, and Sallust.

29   See Pöschl 1991 and now Linke 2000; especially on the connection between *mos maiorum* and *exempla*, see Hölkeskamp 1996.

30   This is the general conclusion of Claudius's speech supporting the idea of making Gallic nobles senators (in Tacitus's version, *Annals* 11.24; see above n. 22) and (ironically, considering the actual issue) in Lucius Vitellius's speech supporting the marriage between Claudius and his grand-niece Agrippina (again in Tacitus's version, *Annals* 12.6).

31   See the chapter on "Exempla and conservatism" in Fox 2007: 152–55.

32   Augustus, *Res gestae* 8: *Legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi*. It is well known that Augustus here refers to his moral legislation. According to Suetonius, *Augustus* 31, Augustus himself chose those great men of the Roman past whose statues were to be erected as examples of virtue in the new *Forum Augustum* in Rome; see Luce 1990; Kienast 1999: 207, 210–11.

33   Livy, pref. 9, immediately before he speaks about the value of *exempla*.

34   Leppin 2008: 48: "Ambrosius konnte … der traditionalistischen Denkform des Exemplum verbunden bleiben … dadurch, dass er sich auf neue Exempla bezog, nämlich auf die Könige des Alten Testaments."

35   See the indexes in editions of both works. On Orosius's understanding of history, see now Cobet 2009.

36   See Pöschl 1991: 189: "Die Macht des Beispiels in Rom ist aber nichts anderes als die Macht der Geschichte und die römische Geschichtsschreibung eine Form römischen Vorbilddenkens. Sie will große Beispiele hinstellen, die durch ihre Autorität verpflichten."

37   For Roman *historia continua* see Mehl 2011: 40, 50, 89 and index *s. v.* "continuation in historiography."

38   The strikingly logical argument, as sketched above, is not the achievement of the Emperor Claudius – for whose speech (as far as it is preserved in an inscription; see n. 22) a sometimes quite crude historical erudition is more characteristic than logic of argument – but that of the historian Tacitus (or of a literary source used by him). One might, of course, regard the Roman policy (as described in Tacitus, *Annals* 11.24) as a positive example and the opposite Greek policy (as described there too) as a negative example. But neither would be an *exemplum* of the moralistic and personalized Roman type.

References

Andreae, B. 1999. *Römische Kunst*. Revised and expanded edn. Freiburg im Breisgau; also Darmstadt 2000.

Beck, H., and U. Walter (trans., comm.). 2001. *Die frühen römischen Historiker*, I: *Von Fabius Pictor bis C. Gellius*. Darmstadt.

Behrwald, R. 2009. "Festkalender der frühen Kaiserzeit als Medien der Erinnerung." In
    H. Beck and H.-U. Wiemer (eds.), *Feiern und Erinnern. Geschichtsbilder im Spiegel
    antiker Feste*, 141–66. Berlin.

Bloomer, W.M. 1992. *Valerius Maximus and the Rhetoric of the New Nobility*. Chapel Hill.

Bücher, F. 2006. *Verargumentierte Geschichte: Exempla Romana im politischen Diskurs der
    späten römischen Republik*. Stuttgart.

Chaplin, J.D. 2000. *Livy's Exemplary History*. Oxford.

Chassignet, M. (ed., trans.). 1986. *Caton: Les origines (fragments). Texte établi, traduit et
    commenté*. Paris.

Chassignet, M. 1996. *L'annalistique romaine*, I: *Les annales des pontifes et l'annalistique
    ancienne (fragments)*. Texte et traduction. Paris.

Cobet, J. 2009. "Orosius' Weltgeschichte. Tradition und Konstruktion." *Hermes* 137:
    60–92.

Dahlheim, W. 2010. *Augustus: Aufrührer, Herrscher, Heiland. Eine Biographie*. Munich.

Eck, W. 2007. *The Age of Augustus*. 2nd edn. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Eisenhut, W. 1994. *Einführung in die antike Rhetorik und ihre Geschichte*. 5th edn.
    Darmstadt.

Flach, D. 1998. *Römische Geschichtsschreibung*. 3rd rev. edn. Darmstadt.

Fleck, M. 1993. *Cicero als Historiker*. Stuttgart.

Fox, M. 2007. *Cicero's Philosophy of History*. Oxford.

Fuhrmann, M. 1995. *Die antike Rhetorik. Eine Einführung*. 4th edn. Munich.

Hölkeskamp, K.-J. 1996. "*Exempla* und *Mos maiorum*. Überlegungen zum kollektiven
    Gedächtnis der Nobilität." In H.-J. Gehrke and A. Möller (eds.), *Soziale Kommunikation,
    Traditionsbildung und historisches Bewußtsein*, 301–38. Tübingen.

Hölscher, T. 2001. "Die Alten vor Augen. Politische Denkmäler und öffentliches Gedächtnis im
    republikanischen Rom." In G. Melville (ed.), *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung. Verstetigung
    kultureller Ordnungsmuster in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, 183–211. Cologne.

Kienast, D. 1999. *Augustus. Prinzeps und Monarch*. 3rd edn. Darmstadt.

Kierdorf, W. 2003. *Römische Geschichtsschreibung der republikanischen Zeit*. Heidelberg.

Knoche, U. 1934. "Der römische Ruhmesgedanke." *Philologus* 89: 102–24. Repr. in
    H. Oppermann (ed.), *Römische Wertbegriffe*, 420–45. Darmstadt 1967.

Kraus, C.S., and A.J. Woodman. 1997. *Latin Historians*. Oxford.

Leppin, H. 2008. "Zum politischen Denken des Ambrosius." In T. Fuhrer (ed.), *Die
    christlich-philosophischen Diskurse der Spätantike: Texte, Personen, Institutionen*, 33–49.
    Stuttgart.

Levick, B. 2010. *Augustus: Image and Substance*. Harlow, London, and New York.

Linke, M. (ed.). 2000. *Mos maiorum. Untersuchungen zu den Formen der Identitätsstiftung
    und Stabilisierung in der römischen Republik*. Stuttgart.

Luce, T.J. 1990. "Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum." In K. Raaflaub and M. Toher
    (eds.), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*,
    123–38. Berkeley.

Marincola, J. (ed.). 2007. *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*. 2 vols. Malden,
    MA and Oxford.

Mehl, A. 2005. "Geschichtsschreibung in und über Rom." In E.-M. Becker (ed.), *Die antike
    Historiographie und die Anfänge der christlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, 111–36. Berlin.

Mehl, A. 2011. *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development*.
    Trans. H.-F. Müller. Malden, MA and Oxford (slightly amended from the German version,
    Stuttgart 2001).

Meister, K. 1990. *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Hellenismus.* Stuttgart.

Mellor, R. 1999. *The Roman Historians.* New York.

Oppermann, I. 2000. *Zur Funktion historischer Beispiele in Ciceros Briefen.* Munich.

Paschoud, F. 1967. *Roma Aeterna. Études sur le patriotisme romain dans l'occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions.* Rome.

Peter, H. 1914/1906. *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae,* I: 2nd edn., II: 1st edn. Leipzig.

Pöschl, V. 1991. "Die römische Auffassung der Geschichte." In J.M. Alonso-Núñez (ed.), *Geschichtsbild und Geschichtsdenken im Altertum*, 177–99. Darmstadt. First publ. *Gymnasium* 63 (1956) 190–206.

Rüpke, J. 1995. "Fasti. Quellen oder Produkte römischer Geschichtsschreibung?" *Klio* 77: 184–202.

Shackleton Bailey, D.R. (ed., trans.). 2000. *Valerius Maximus, Memorable Doings and Sayings.* 2 vols. Cambridge, MA.

Sherk, R.K. (ed., trans.). 1988. *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian.* Translated Documents of Greece & Rome 6. Cambridge.

Timpe, D. 2006a. "Römische Geschichte und Weltgeschichte." In Timpe, *Antike Geschichtsschreibung. Studien zur Historiographie*, 109–31. Ed. U. Walter. Darmstadt.

Timpe, D. 2006b. "Westgriechische Historiographie." In Timpe, *Antike Geschichtsschreibung. Studien zur Historiographie*, 3–63. Ed. U. Walter. Darmstadt.

von Albrecht, M. 1995. *Meister römischer Prosa von Cato bis Apuleius.* 3rd edn. Tübingen. [The English version, *Masters of Roman Prose: Interpretative Studies*, trans. N. Adkin, Leeds, 1989, is based on the 1st German edn., Heidelberg 1982.]

Walter, U. 2004. *Memoria und res publica. Zur Geschichtskultur im republikanischen Rom.* Frankfurt am Main.

Wirszubski, C. 1954. "Cum dignitate otium." *Journal of Roman Studies* 44: 1–13.

Woodman, A. J. 1988. *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography: Four Studies.* London.

14

Patterns of Early Christian Thinking and Writing of History: Paul – Mark – Acts

Eve-Marie Becker

Christian historiography emerged during the first four centuries CE, in close connection with the gradual rise of early Christian literature.[1] It is not until Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica* in the fourth century that we can speak of Christian "historiography" *stricto sensu* (Ulrich 2005: 278, with reference to Mehl 2001: 184). And it is not accidental that Eusebius was active as a historiographer in the Constantinian era when Christian historiography became an official matter. Between the first and the fourth centuries, however, only a variety of what we might best call "prehistoriographical" Christian texts were produced and disseminated, such as lists of bishops, indicating a chronology of bishops (Wischmeyer 2005), and acts of martyrs, documenting the events surrounding the death of a martyr (e.g., Wischmeyer 2011). Perhaps typically of Christianity in the second and third centuries, these texts offer preliminary collections of institutional data and the remembrance of martyrs as prototypes of Christian confession. In these prehistoriographical texts, commemoration constantly interacts with teaching (catechesis), as is characteristic already of the earliest Christian writings produced in the first century.

In those earliest Christian texts that have been canonized as "New Testament" writings we do not encounter "historiography" either. But because these texts were considered formative early on, they suggest how Christians understood the "past" and created "history" in earliest times: Luke is, so to speak, a forerunner of Eusebius (thus also Müller 2009). Our task therefore is to determine more precisely what types of prehistoriographical activity occur in these New Testament texts.

The earliest Christian texts basically reveal an awareness of the need to create a "communicative memory."[2] This is because, on the one hand, authors like Paul and Luke tend to remind their readers of the early history of mission, community-building, and community life in order to provide an ethical framework for the organization and stabilization of community life.[3] On the other hand, traditions about Jesus's life, mission, and death needed to be preserved and disseminated at the latest when the generation of historical "eyewitnesses" was about to pass away (this is the function of the Gospels). In none of these cases, remembrance of the past or thinking and writing of "history" can be measured by the criterion of "historicity." This is generally true of all literary texts dealing with history, and in particular of ancient texts doing so.[4] None of the early Christian texts have a precise notion of "history" (*Geschichtsbegriff*) either. Except for Galatians 1:18, the term *historia* or *historein* does not occur in New Testament texts at all. Nevertheless, we will see that remembering the past and creating "history" from such memory was crucial to early Christian communities.[5] Moreover, the importance of thinking about and writing history increased from Paul to Luke (circa 50–90) and already from Paul to Mark (50–70).

The interest in and commitment to the past in early Christianity was not only the result of *internal* factors, such as the passing away of the first generation of believers in Christ, but also of important *external* reasons. As soon as Christians self-consciously became involved in the religious and social debates of their time,[6] there was an obvious and increasing tendency to remember the "history of events" from "the very beginning" (*ap' archēs*, e.g., Luke 1:2; 1 John 1:1; also Mark 1:1) with specific regard to the interpretive needs of the present. Conversely, remembering the past and thinking history helped develop an early "Christian identity."[7] To look for the beginnings of thinking and writing history in early Christian times thus implies that there already existed a constellation involving a religious group that was considered distinct both by outsiders (Acts 24:5: "Nazarenes"; 11:26: "Christians") and from the inside (*ekklēsiai*).[8] We might even suggest that the origins of history-writing are closely related to the origins of a specific religious group that defined itself by narrating and interpreting the past, that is, by developing a certain "sense of (a communal) history" that was characteristic for "Christ-believers."[9]

In this chapter I will discuss some early Christian texts that reveal various patterns of thinking and writing history.[10] Starting with the earliest of these texts (1 Thessalonians, circa 49/50), we observe, as an important topic of early Christian writings, a tendency, growing from Paul to Luke, to transform the immediate past of missionary work into a community history. Examining the earliest Gospel narrative (Mark, circa 70), we need to ask how Mark's purpose – to write a "history of the Gospel" (1:1) – builds on the Jesus-traditions that were available to him. While in the former case we focus on how a "sense of history" was developed through literary forms from Paul to Acts, in the latter case we need to define the phenomenon of transmitting, transforming, and conceptualizing "Jesus-traditions." We will see that in both cases prehistoriographical interests interfere with "kerygmatic" interpretations and catechetical purposes.

Towards a History of Mission and "Church": From Paul to Acts

In probably the oldest Christian literary document, Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians (circa 49/50), Paul reminds his readers of the beginnings of his preaching of the Gospel in the community of Thessalonica (1 Thess 1:5–10):

> [5] Our gospel (*euangelion*) came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. [6] And you became imitators (*mimētai*) of us and of the Lord (*kuriou*), for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, [7] so that you became an example (*typon*) to all the believers (*tois pisteuousin*) in Macedonia and in Achaia. [8] For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. [9] For they themselves report concerning us what a welcome (*eisodon*) we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve (*douleuein*) a living and true God, [10] and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath (*orgē*) to come.

This text seems to be typical of how Paul refers back to the beginnings of his missionary work and transforms this past into a "founding story."[11] After mentioning various methods by which the Gospel was taught in Thessalonica (1:5: *logos, dynamis, pneuma* [word, power, spirit]; see also 2 Thess 2:2), Paul points to the community's adoption of the Gospel and hereby also to its leading role among other communities in Greece (1:6–8; a similar motif is in 2 Corinthians 9:2). In 1:9a Paul reflects on the religious predispositions of the community members – obviously mainly gentiles or pagans[12] – that facilitated their conversion. In 1:9b–10 Paul clarifies – probably on the basis of "the missionary proclamation of Hellenistic Christianity" (Donfried 2002: 79) – the precise kerygmatic function of preaching the Gospel as an act simultaneously expressing obedience toward God, confession of Christ, and expectation of a near future, that is, Christ's eschatological return. Here the linking of narrative with kerygmatic interests is as evident as the interrelation of past and future (Minois 1998). Reporting in the past tense, of course, serves as preparation for the eschatological future.

We are not in a position to judge the historicity of Paul's sketch and how closely it reflects the reality and successes of his missionary activities in Thessalonica so that it could become a real founding story for the community members. According to Luke's narrative of Paul's visit to Thessalonica, however, things were rather different.[13] Paul was soon – shortly after his preaching in the synagogue (Acts 17:2) – involved in an uproar that was caused by the jealousy of *Ioudaioi* (17:5). He had to flee to Berea (17:10), keeping, however, his contacts with the community (19:22; 20:1–3). Paul does not mention this but merely refers to conflicts in Philippi (1 Thess 2:1–12) and, generally, situations causing suffering (2:14–15). Rather, what emerges from 1 Thess 1 is that already shortly after founding the *ekklēsia* in Thessalonica (circa 49), he began to think and write about important aspects

of the "past" of this single community in northern Greece. He did this, of course, from his own point of view and with the aim of defining a *common memory* that was shared and remembered by his readers too. Thus Paul created something like a "communicative memory,"[14] and by doing so he initiated a type of what one might call early "missionary history" in order to give the community a foundation story. Such a short version of a community history is based on (auto)biographical involvement (Becker 2005b) and technically mediated by letter-writing. Paul in fact begins here to transfer the "past" into a kind of a community "history." Or to say this with the words of the American orientalist Gary Beckman (2005: 343–44), "The *past* in all of its manifold aspects is gone forever and cannot be retrieved. *History* is a reconstruction of elements of the past in the mind of a human being of a later generation" (my italics).

Yet in the case of 1 Thess it is the *same* person, Paul, who was himself involved in the past, reminds his readers of this past, and at the same time transforms this past into a draft of a community "history."[15] This transformation happens here already within *one* generation. If Paul seems almost hasty in shaping such communal memory, this must be because in the same letter (4:13–5:11) Paul refers to the imminent return of the Lord and the "day of the Lord" (5:2) when trying to comfort his readers (4:18) and convey ethical admonitions to them (5:4–11). In this letter, the reference to the past thus serves as an admonitory reminder of the immediate expectation of the eschatological time – it does not serve the construction of "history" as such.

In his letter to the Thessalonians, then, Paul does not reflect upon the "history of mission and church" from any historiographical perspective. It is only in the time of the so-called third generation that past events are summarized and conceptualized more extensively and elaborately. Nevertheless, we could say that Luke, the author of the *Acts of the Apostles* – the New Testament text that comes closest to "historiography" in the strict sense of the term[16] – develops from a perspective that is probably two generations removed (circa 80–90) what Paul had initiated in his letters.[17] Luke realizes this idea of conceptualizing missionary history by creating *Acta*-literature that recalls the "deeds of the apostles." Luke simply calls this book a *logos* (Acts 1:1). While Paul begins to transform past experiences into "communicative memory," the author of Acts creates "historiography" out of an obviously already developed Pauline sense of missionary history. Hence, schematically, we might postulate the following development:

$$\text{Past} \rightarrow \text{communicative memory} \rightarrow \text{"history"} \rightarrow \text{historiography}$$

How, then, does the literary – or rather, historiographical – outline of Acts differ from the Pauline letters? In an important but not undisputed article on Acts, Hubert Cancik argues for taking *ekklēsia* (9:31) as a fictional persona; hence it would actually be an institution that acts here as the "historical subject."[18] Cancik seeks to contextualize Acts in the frame of "cultural historiography" and defines it more precisely as a "history of religious institutions," comparable to the history of philosophy.[19] He considers the term *hairesis* in 24:5 ("'sect' of the *Nazoraioi*") an especially important indication of the nature of Acts as "history of institutions: it provides a connection to Greek educational institutions" (1997: 677). In Luke's history, "rivalries between

Jewish religious parties are thematized as discussions among the various *haireseis* of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and *Nazoraioi* concerning the controversial questions (*zētēmata*) of the resurrection, angels, and the spirit (23:6–8; 25:19). The accusation against Paul employs terminology from the language of Hellenistic schools" (21:21: "you teach apostasy from the law of Moses").[20] Cancik (1997: 679) thus suggests as a title of the work *De origine et processu ecclesiae (sectae) Christianorum* ("On the Origin and Growth of the Church (or Sect) of the Christians"; ibid.). Cancik's interpretation of Acts cannot be discussed here more extensively but it is a useful attempt to characterize the specific historiographical profile of Acts in the context of Hellenistic-Roman historiography.

Apart from the literary framework, there might also be a social dimension to Luke's extension of Paul's beginnings of writing missionary and community history. In shaping and sharing his memory, Paul relates to communities that he addresses directly (as he does in 1 Thess 1:1). In contrast, Luke's historiographical ambitions in the Gospel narrative as well as in Acts seem to be initiated and supported by a patron named Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Discussions about whether Theophilus should be considered a real or fictitious person,[21] how far Luke's proems simply follow literary conventions,[22] and to what extent Luke addresses his works to specific audiences or communities cannot be continued here either.[23] On the one hand, a "literary dedication is a social function" (Alexander 2000: 164). On the other hand, however, behind the dedication at least a part of Luke's authorial intention becomes obvious: Luke writes Luke-Acts because there are Christians "seeking further information about the origins of … faith and the early history of the church" (Barrett 1994: 66). In this respect, Luke-Acts basically has a catechetical function – it was hardly written as pure historiography.

So far, we have discussed the origin and development of written commemoration of early Christian missionary and community history from approximately 50 to 90. Two final remarks on Luke's composition of "history" in Acts should be added here. First, in the Acts of the Apostles as well as in the Gospel, Luke connects the history of events with "salvation history."[24] In the Gospel narrative it becomes evident already in the proem that Luke presents events that "have both historical (*pragmata*, events) and salvation-historical significance (*peplērophorēmena*, [events] fulfilled, v. 1), and just as the apostles are at once both eyewitnesses and witnesses to the truth (v. 2), so does knowledge accompany faith; that is, Luke's historiographical activity cooperates with the kerygmatic traditions of the church" (Bovon 2002: 25). We could go further and say that in Luke's composition historical events and salvation history do not simply interact but also interpret each other (examples are the historical data in Luke 2:1, 3:1; Acts 4:6). In contrast to the proem of the Gospel narrative, however, we do not find in Acts such an explicit reflection on history-writing. The "content of Luke's second volume" seems best expressed in Acts 1:8 which might be considered "in a sense the apodosis to vv.1, 2" (Barrett 1998: 79) or at least a "programmatic statement" (Pervo 2009: 43): "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses (*martyres*) in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

By creating this prophecy – a veritable "introductory oracle" (Pervo 2009: 43) – and presenting it as the very last word of the resurrected Jesus (see also Matthew 28:16–20), Luke defines the historiographical concept that he follows up in Acts, chs. 2–7 (Jerusalem), 8–9 (Judea and Samaria), and 13:47 (to the end of the world; Barrett 1998: 79–80): the missionary history is based on witnesses (*martyres*); it continues according to a geographical schedule that has universalist meaning,[25] and it is initiated by inaugurating prophetic words of Jesus himself who appears to his followers within forty days of his passion and death (Acts 1:3).

Hence we observe kerygmatic hermeneutics in reflecting upon the past – both in Paul's letters and in Luke's dealing with the past from a perspective of salvation history. But significant differences between Luke's and Paul's kerygmatic attitude should not be overlooked. While Paul reminds his readers of the past with the aim of preparing them ethically for the "day of the Lord," Luke's concept of writing missionary history remains open in the end. In Acts 28, Luke focuses on the future activities of only one apostle: even as a prisoner Paul preaches freely and with confidence in Rome (28:31), so that, according to Luke's disposition, the history of the mission continues successfully even under difficult conditions. This concept implies that Luke – as opposed to Paul – has indeed developed a concept of "history." Remembering the past does not primarily serve as preparation for an eschatological time; to Luke history is a continuum where salvation happens.

As the second final remark, we should mention here the scholarly discussion about Luke's sources in Acts and their significance for helping us appreciate Luke as a historian.[26] The identification of oral traditions and literary sources is much debated, even if it seems obvious that Acts is based on certain personal and/or local historical traditions or even sources that are connected with persons (like Peter and Paul) or places (like Palestine or Antioch).[27] But, in fact, in the beginning of Acts Luke reflects explicitly neither on his historiographical methods nor his historical materials. This is to some extent different in his Gospel narrative where Luke is forced to position himself programmatically because other Christian Gospel narratives (esp. Mark) exist already. While in writing his Gospel he continues and competes with earlier narratives, his literary concept in Acts of writing missionary and community history seems rather creative and innovative. Thus, in regard to Acts, I would agree with Richard I. Pervo's suggestion (2009: 18) that "Luke's achievement as a historian lies more in his success at creating history than in recording it." In other words, in Acts Luke is writing missionary history by creating "history" as a literary concept. Thus here the *auctor ad Theophilum* leaves Paul behind who had been approaching the past only by transforming it into a communicative memory.

Towards a "History of the Gospel": From Paul to Mark

Focusing on the earliest Christian text (1 Thess), we observed how the idea of surveying the community's past led to the literary concept of missionary history. Moving now to the earliest Christian Gospel narrative (Mark), we will find that it

is again the first Christian author, Paul, who contributed decisively to the rise of the other prehistoriographical genre in early Christianity: Gospel literature. This will help us discover another way by which early Christian approaches to the past were developed further and eventually conceptualized. This line of development goes from Paul to Mark. More specifically, we will see how Paul's historical approach to Jesus-traditions influences Mark's concept of a prehistoriographical Gospel narrative.

First of all, what is a Gospel narrative about? The topic of the earliest extant text of this type (circa 70; Becker 2011a) is defined in Mark 1:1: "The beginning (*archē*) of the gospel (*tou euangeliou*) of Jesus Christ [the Son of God (text-critically not certain)]."According to this headline, Mark's Gospel deals with the beginnings of the gospel of/from Jesus Christ.[28] Because *archē* here must be understood as a "temporal expression" (Elliott 1997: 43), a historical rather than (as suggested by Klumbies 2001) mythical ambition underlies Mark's writing: he seeks to go back to the beginnings of the Gospel and its preaching (esp. Mark 1:14–15) that – in his opinion – reaches back even to the prophetic words of Isaiah (40:3, cf. Mark 1:2a, 3) in the Septuagint.[29]

Mark's narrative of the "history of the Gospel" is arranged as a prose-text. It starts with the mission of John the Baptist (1:4–6:29), that is, his preaching of the baptism in the desert (1:4–11) and his imprisonment and death (1:14–6:29). The history of the Gospel is narrated as a "history of certain events," such as the preaching, teaching, miracles, and sufferings of Jesus. In 1:14, Mark's narrative moves on from John the Baptist's activities to Jesus's missionary activities in Galilee, his travel to and deeds in Judea (10:1) and Jerusalem (11:1). The missions of John and Jesus overlap only in the baptism scene (Mark 1:9–11); basically, they thus succeed each other. The "history of events" ends with the pronouncement of Jesus's appearance among his disciples in Galilee (16:1–8). Although the Gospel narrative focuses, at least from 1:14, on a person, Jesus of Nazareth, I think we should avoid taking it as a "biography" and rather understand it as a "prehistoriographical text"[30] that is close to "person-centered historiography" as we know it especially from early Jewish literature in Hellenistic times.[31] In terms of its literary character, the Gospel of Mark thus fits in a broad sense in the frame of "Hellenistic historiography."[32]

As I have argued in my book on Mark, we should not assume that Mark's prehistoriographical interest in writing about the "beginnings of the Gospel" contradicts his kerygmatic interpretation. Rather, we might say that Mark's kerygmatic concept of the history of the Gospel represents to a certain extent a Christian or religious approach to history, while an author like Polybius uses fortune (*tychē*) as a metahistorical category to interpret the historical events he narrates (Becker 2006: 151–52, 169–77). In antiquity, conceptualizing history always implies a method of arranging the historical events by interpreting them on a metahistorical level.

Why and how, then, was the *kērygma* established as such a metahistorical category to interpret the early Christian past as history? Here it helps, again, to look at two Pauline texts (1 Cor 11:23–25; 15:3–5) that are important not only for their

commemoration of Jesus's passion and death but also for the formation of the Christian *kērygma*.[33] Both texts were written circa 55, that is, precisely between Jesus's mission and death (circa 30) and the creation of Mark's Gospel (circa 70). Both texts might suggest how certain Jesus-traditions were transmitted in the tension between preserving them *and* interpreting them from a post-Easter perspective, illustrating a constant interaction between transmission *and* kerygmatic interpretation.

> 1 Cor 11: [23a] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, [23b] that the Lord on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (*eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*). [25] In the same way also the cup, after supping, saying, "This cup is the new covenant (*kainē diathēkē*) in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

> 1 Cor 15: [3a] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, [3b] that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

The Jesus-tradition in 1 Cor 11:23–25 is narrative in its nature ("erzählende Jesusüberlieferung": Lindemann 2008: 289). The question, however, is, how Paul who was not a follower of the historical Jesus got to know such a Jesus-tradition.[34] That Paul knows certain synoptic traditions is obvious.[35] He even quotes Jesus at least three times explicitly.[36] The possibility that Paul learned about the Jesus-traditions after his commissioning during his first visit in Jerusalem (Keightley 2005: esp. 129–30), where he met Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal 1:18–19) must remain uncertain (Hengel and Schwemer 1998: esp. 229–36). More evidence, however, can be found for how Paul revised and modified an earlier tradition he received. As Martin Hengel observes correctly, 1 Cor 11:23–25 is one of those rare passages where Paul gives any temporal indication (*en tēi nykti*).[37] This suggests that v. 23b is a narrative element that is already part of the Lord's supper-tradition (*paradosis*; 1 Cor 11:23b–25) and thus part of a pre-Pauline tradition – which confirms that some historical data were transmitted to Paul. Only v. 23a serves as an introduction to this *paradosis*: I received … I passed on (*parelabon … paredōka*), that might be written by Paul himself. This introduction is similar to 1 Cor 15:3.

It is no accident that the *paradosis* in 1 Cor 11:23b–25 closely resembles the reports of the last Passover of Jesus with his disciples in Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 14:22–24parr.):[38] it might be that this *paradosis* was transmitted as a *memoria* (piece of memory) in the context of the "passion narrative" (Mark 14–15parr.)[39] which – according to Gerd Theissen – was preserved by the community in Jerusalem.[40] As a narrative interpretation of that *memoria*, the passion narrative could have acted as a "locus" for Jesus's death.[41] This picture fits well with what we know about the community in Jerusalem that must have played a

pivotal role in remembering Jesus, transforming the past of Jesus's life and death into a historical narrative, and creating the prehistory of the Gospel. In addition, it must have been relevant for the emergence of several post-Easter traditions.[42] We might even compare the role of the Jerusalem community, for example, to the Epicurean school in Athens (Clay 1998: esp. 55–102). Diskin Clay shows how "commemoration" in the Epicurean community interacted with community-life, including cults and religious festivals that were partly established by Epicurus "for the heroic dead of the first generation of his philosophical community in Athens" or "to honor his own memory in his own lifetime."[43]

Similarly, the commemoration of the *paradosis* concerning the Lord's Supper partly happened ritually, by celebrating the ceremony (1 Cor 11:17–34),[44] partly through literature, by contextualizing it in the frame of letter and Gospel writings (1 Cor 11; Mark 14parr.). The fact *that* the Passover-ceremony was transmitted is – according to Paul and Luke – based on Jesus's demand, that it should be remembered (1 Cor 11:24, 25; Luke 22:19). As the introductory formula (1 Cor 11:23a) indicates, Paul has no doubt that the *paradosis* does go back to Jesus himself (so too Hengel 2004: 122). Even if we are unable to prove the historicity of the *paradosis* and Jesus's demand it is safe to conclude that Paul took this part of the passion-story as historical. It seems plausible, then, that Paul encountered the *paradosis* in Jerusalem, at the latest, and that during that visit he also heard more of the passion narrative and the post-Easter-*kērygma* as they are reflected in 1 Cor 15:3b–5.[45]

So how are 1 Cor 15:3b–5 and 11:23–25 related to each other? 1 Cor 15:3b–5 too contains – similar to the Lord's Supper *paradosis* in 11:23–25 – a pre-Pauline tradition that perhaps was connected with the Jerusalem community.[46] In the context of 15:1–5, however, Paul does not refer to specific Jesus-traditions but rather reflects the inner connection of transmitting and receiving the Gospel-traditions: according to 15:1–3, Christian traditions relate to the preaching of the Gospel (*to euangelion ho euēngelisamēn hymin*, 15:1); they are handed over (*paradidōmi*, *paradosis*, 15:3); they are received by Paul as well as by the community members (*paralambanō*, 15:1, 3); they even constitute the communities (*hestēkate*, 15:1).[47] Thus, Paul emphasizes here the continuity of preaching, transmitting, receiving, and forming early Christian Gospel-traditions and their meaning for the community's existence. The two texts (1 Cor 15:3b–5; 11:23–25) need to be treated differently even if the introductory formula (*paradosis*-terminology) is quite similar:[48] 1 Cor 11 contains a Jesus-tradition, 1 Cor 15 parts of a post-Easter *kērygma*.

Such differences become even more evident if we look at how the content of the Gospel is defined in 1 Cor 15:3b–5. It combines aspects of "historical" reminiscences (Jesus's death and burial) with kerygmatic interpretation (Jesus's resurrection). It is based on eyewitnesses (such as Peter) and the interpretation of scriptures (*kata tas graphas*) that attest to the events. In contrast to 1 Cor 11:23–25, the content of the *euangelion* can here not be related to Jesus's life and mission, because the sequence of historical reminiscences only starts with Jesus's death and burial.[49] Hence, in any case, 1 Cor 15:3b–5 seems to be a post-Easter *kērygma*, formulated by the Jerusalem

community, while 11:23–25 is a Jesus-tradition, preserved and framed narratively (cf. Mark 14:12–25) by the Jerusalem community. We thus get a clearer idea of what the Jerusalem community's role was about: it seems not only to have passed along Jesus-traditions and created the passion narrative in remembering Jesus's death, but also to have interpreted Jesus's death and resurrection kerygmatically. Christian identity was therefore not shaped only by remembering Jesus's death and classifying it as the death of a "martyr,"[50] but rather more by interpreting the "historical events" around Jesus's death kerygmatically. In this respect, both texts contain "morphological elements belonging to the historiographical construction of the passion":[51] the passion narrative as a prehistoriographical part of the Gospel story is based on Jesus-traditions as well as the post-Easter *kērygma*.

Our conclusion, then, is that, on the one hand, Paul knows Jesus-traditions (such as 1 Cor 11:23b–25); on the other hand, he refers to post-Easter-traditions (for example, in 1 Cor 15:3b–5). Even if both groups of traditions are defined as *paradosis* (1 Cor 11:23a, 15:3a) and might be connected to the Jerusalem community they differ in terms of their "formation-date"[52] and their function of remembering the past and creating a "sense of history": the group of *Jesus-traditions* serves the commemoration of Jesus and the passion-events and thus eventually transforms the past of Jesus's life and death into a "history." By contrast, the group of *post-Easter-traditions* serves the remembrance of the post-Easter *kērygma* that obviously acts as an interpretation of the passion events and thus transforms the past of the apostles' Gospel-preaching into a prehistory of the community's Gospel-preaching; it is thereby comparable to 1 Thess 1:9–10 (discussed above): history here finally is the history of the Gospel preaching that is based on the interrelation of *apostolos* and *ekklēsia*.

So far, however, we have focused only on the differences between 1 Cor 11 and 15, texts in which Paul basically deals with two different types of traditions. But what is Paul's view of these traditions and their specific nature? Does he himself reflect on their differences? By identifying in 1 Cor both groups of traditions similarly as *paradosis* (11:23a, 15:3a), he seeks to equalize both types of traditions – the remembering of Jesus *and* of the post-Easter *kērygma*.[53] Thereby Paul finally reveals the basic patterns of how the history of the Gospel is built up between 30 and 70 CE. Both the Jesus-traditions and their kerygmatic post-Easter interpretation had been passed along through the years. These two types of traditions were now equalized. By doing so, Paul prepared the ground for Mark's writing of the first Gospel narrative. Mark's Gospel itself is arranged as a mixture of elements that commemorate Jesus-traditions and reflect the post-Easter *kērygma*: Mark 14–15 is an extended version of the passion narrative that was originally preserved in the Jerusalem community. And Mark 8:31[54] represents Mark's way of turning the post-Easter-*kērygma* (as in 1 Cor 15:3b–5) into a part of the history of the Gospel.

Hence in writing his Gospel, Mark is basically only extending Paul's way of equalizing commemoration and *kērygma*: like Paul, Mark refers in his narrative to Jesus-traditions as well as traditions based on the post-Easter *kērygma*. With Paul, however, Mark adds many more Jesus-traditions (such as miracles and *logia*

[traditions of Jesus's words]) and synthesizes his materials into a concise narrative that he opens with: "Beginning of the Gospel" (Mark 1:1). Thus Mark's Gospel is, on the one hand, basically built upon the two types of traditions that can already be found in 1 Cor 11 and 15. On the other hand, Mark goes much beyond Paul because in his Gospel narrative he creates a genuine literary concept of the history of the Gospel story by accumulating diverse kinds of traditions.

Approximately twenty years later, Luke further transformed Mark's concept by reflecting upon the origins of the "history of the Gospel preaching" from a more distant perspective: in the proem of his Gospel narrative (Luke 1:1–4), Luke makes his historiographical methods explicit both with respect to the earlier Gospel narrative and in continuing the Pauline *paradosis*-terminology of the formation of Gospel-traditions.[55]

Short Conclusion

The early Christian authors – Paul, Mark, and Luke – hardly wrote historiography in an elaborated way. Nor did Luke do this in Acts, where he is much more creating "history," than writing historiography based on reliable sources.[56] Nevertheless, I have pointed out two topics that are constitutive for early Christian awareness of "commemorating the past" and "thinking history" and that therefore might be considered central "patterns" of early Christian historical thinking and writing.

First, from Paul to Acts (as explored in the first section of this chapter) we observe an increasing interest in commemorating the past of the missionary history and transforming it into an open-ended history. This process seems to be accompanied by a decline of eschatological ideas. The concept of "missionary and community history" fills out the gap created by unfulfilled religious hopes, namely the expectation of Jesus's eschatological return.

Second, in the case of Mark's Gospel (section 2), we discussed how the task of writing a "history of the Gospel story and preaching" could have been initiated and developed between 30 and 70 CE. In this process, the interrelation of transmitting Jesus-traditions *and* interpreting especially Jesus's death and resurrection kerygmatically must have been a decisive factor in advancing the basic idea of creating a "history of the Gospel." We could even say that this interactive relationship helps us understand how the Gospel literature as a specific literary genre with a prehistoriographical component came into being.[57] But what is the central idea behind the Gospel concept? The narrative of the "history of the Gospel story" ultimately might have served the very interests that caused its creation: the remembering of Jesus's life, mission, and death as well as the remembrance of the kerygmatical interpretation of these under the conditions of the present.[58]

So far, however, the "Christ-believers" of the first and second century had not yet shaped historiography in a strict literary sense: they had not conceptualized history in a way that would fully meet the reading expectations of a broader Greco-Roman audience familiar with, for example, Thucydides, Polybius, Sallust, or Tacitus.

The formation of early Christian history and historiography needs to be appreciated against three predominant factors. First, in the beginnings the memorization of Jesus-traditions and their transformation into a Gospel-story did not serve to shape a new kind of "historiographical culture." Rather, memory, history, and historiography still followed the Israelite-Jewish historiographical tradition that, in its Greek translation (in the Septuagint), formed the literary foundation for the first generations of Christ-believers. Second, precisely because of their affiliation with Jewish literature, the way the Christians shaped their literature of memory and history was – under the conditions of the Roman Empire and at least in its very beginnings – seen as a strand of "religious literature" (Becker 2010) that originated in Palestine and was connected with a distinct minority of people (Wischmeyer 2009).

Third, in a literary sense, Christian historiographical identity could only develop during the first four centuries after certain constellations had changed. The split between Jews and Christians led to a more precise articulation of Christian self-identity that was partly even enhanced by a strong rejection of its Jewish roots (Marcion). The awareness of a specific "Christian" history that was basically built upon the experience of persecution and martyrdom, grew significantly precisely because of this experience. "Christian" literature of different genres increased and both continued and succeeded to the earliest and formative Christian writings. The adaptation of Hellenistic philology and hermeneutics (for instance, by Origen) moved Christian theology and literature into the orbit of a broader Greco-Roman cultural discourse. And, finally, in the Constantinian era the Christian historiographical identity was no longer that of a minority group but established itself as an eminent model of conceptualizing history (Eusebius). To become a widely accepted literary concept, historiography thus needs the assistance of political and cultural powers (just as Josephus succeeded as a *Flavian* historian). Early Christian thinking and writing of history was not able to connect with such a power. It might precisely be this lack of common acceptance that makes it so interesting to observe how Paul, Mark, and Luke created innovative patterns of how the memory of the past could be preserved and transmitted.

Notes

1   All dates are CE unless noted otherwise. All translations according to the 2nd edn. of the *Revised Standard Version*. Greek words and phrases in quotations from scholarship are transcribed by the editor. Titles of biblical texts are written in full the first time, often abbreviated thereafter. I thank the editor for organizing an inspiring conference and for editorial assistance with this chapter.

2   Assmann 2000: 12 here follows M. Halbwachs and describes the communicative aspects of memory as follows: "Processes of articulation transfer lasting contents of scenic and unconscious memory into narrative and conscious memory" (trans. Kurt Raaflaub).

3   Bovon 2003: 1–2 mentions various reasons for preserving "apostolic memories" in patristic times, such as "to create an ethical model …, to follow the command of love …, the defense of the truth …, the authority of Christian ministry."

4   This insight is one of the irreversible results of "Geschichtshermeneutik" at least since
    Droysen's time. Even if, for example, the reconstruction of Jesus-traditions should
    offer more insight into processes of continuity than discontinuity (see below), this does
    not necessarily say anything about the "historicity" of those traditions.

5   In tendency, this dimension of constructing the past in earliest Christianity has been
    overlooked in former scholarship; see, for example, Dinkler 1967.

6   Such debates included the relation of Christians to the state (Romans 13:1–7), care for
    widows (Acts 6:1–7), and religious issues, such as the resurrection (Mark 12:18–23).

7   See Dunn 2003: 175: "Sociology and social anthropology teach us that groups would
    almost certainly have required a foundation story (or stories) to explain, to themselves,
    as well as to others, why they had formed distinct social groupings, why they were
    designated as 'Nazarenes' and 'Christians'." Similarly, for example, Luz 2007 considers
    the Gospel of Matthew at least partly such a "foundation narrative": "With his story of
    Jesus Matthew tells a *new* foundation story that permits him to understand Israel's
    previous foundational text, the Bible, in a completely new light. In my judgment, here
    in the framework of the biblical-Jewish tradition and literary activity something
    completely new, a revolution, happened" (15). On general methodological issues
    concerning "identity formation," see Holmberg 2008.

8   For the *ekklēsia*-terminology, see, for example, Acts 5:11, the Pauline letters, or
    Revelation 2:1. According to Bickerman 2007, the name "Christians" would itself be a
    result of commemoration: "The name which the followers of Jesus gave themselves
    officially at Antioch, about 40 A.D., is a precious relic … The name shows that at this
    date … his followers continued to think of him according to Jewish patterns of thought"
    (808). Concerning *Christianoi* as an administrative expression in Antioch already in the
    40s CE, see Judge 2008a: 609–11: "The … term … is a Graeco-Latin hybrid, and must
    therefore have been coined by Latin speakers in response to the currency of the Greek
    word *Christos*. Since Acts 11:26 says it was first used at Antioch one must think of mem-
    bers of the Roman administration, army or business community in the Syrian capital.
    They will have coined it as part of their Latin vocabulary … The suffix -*ianus* constitutes
    a political comment … The very name *Christianoi*, then, appears to have arisen in the
    questions posed for Romans over the political loyalty of the followers of Christ … It is
    not until the second half of the second century that we have classical Greek writers refer-
    ring to *Christianoi*." See also Judge 2008b: esp. 437–38.

9   The expression "sense of history" goes back to Kurt Raaflaub's introductory remarks
    at the conference.

10 On the contextualization of New Testament historiographical literature in the frame of
    ancient historiography, see also Becker 2011b. New Testament texts do provide such
    information even if, as "a starting place for the study of the origins of Christianity …
    [they] are perhaps better regarded as a guide to problems than a source of solutions"
    (Humphries 2006: 74).

11 Hengel 2000: 8 identifies Gal 1 and 2; 1 Corinthians 15:1–11; Rom 15:14–32, and
    Philippians 3:4–7 as such narrations on "earliest 'church history'."

12 The perspective is different in Acts 17:1–9 where Paul is preaching in synagogues.

13 On the problems of Luke's narrative of Paul, see generally, for example, Fitzmyer 1998:
    133–38. On Paul's and Luke's accounts of the events in Thessalonica, see also Still 1999.

14 Assmann 1992: 50–56; see also Kirk 2005: 5: "These memories are biographically
    vested in those who experienced originating events." Paul himself explicitly refers to
    this terminology: *mnēmoneuontes* (1 Thess 1:3).

15   Since all this involves the same person, we need to consider all the more that remembering the past "cannot replicate the past, it can … strive for an accurate approximation of past events" (Wyschogrod 2001: 24).

16   Thus already Dibelius 1948; see most recently Molthagen 2009: 181. By contrast, Pervo 2009: 14–18 defines Acts much more as "popular history."

17   This seems true even if it is striking that Luke does not refer explicitly to Paul's letters; see, for example, Pervo 2009: 12: "It is almost impossible to claim that the author of Acts had not heard of the epistles." *Contra*: Fitzmyer 1998: 133: It "is highly unlikely that Luke ever read any of Paul's letters." The dating is debated: Barrett 1998: xlii dates Acts to the late 80s or early 90s. Fitzmyer 1998: 54 opts for an "intermediate dating" (circa 80–85) and Pervo 2009: 5 for a later one (circa 115).

18   Cancik 1997: 674; 2009. For critical reactions, see recently, for example, Pervo 2009: 17 n. 96, referring to Reasoner 1999. In contrast to Cancik, Wolter 2009a votes for classifying Luke-Acts as "Epochengeschichte," basically following Jewish-Hellenistic patterns of thinking about history. On the genre-debate in general, see recently Dormeyer 2009.

19   Cancik 1997: 681, 694 offers the following criteria for such a "cultural historiography": "(1) a chronological layout of the text; (2) use of historiographical forms: narrative, style, and topics; (3) reports of changes, developments, the dependence of various parts of cultural systems on each other and on economic and political events; and (4) the theme of the report, the 'historical subject', is an institution, a transpersonal subject such as law, religion, a philosophical teaching or school" (681).

20   Cancik 1997: 688, 693: Analogies "to the origin and growth of the 'sect of the Nazoraioi', their 'apostasy' from the law of Moses, and their 'new teaching' are not found in the ancient, Western history of religion or in the historiography of that religion, but rather in the history of philosophy and the historiography of that philosophy." On insights into "sectarianism" provided by Josephus, see lately Baumgarten 2007.

21   Bovon 2002: 9: "Theophilus … is not an abstraction, but a historical person." On papyrological evidence for the name Theophilus, see Head 2004: 34, esp. n. 12. Alexander 2000: 162–63, however, emphasizes: The "existence of Luke's own written version is the result of an entirely personal decision (*edoxe kamoi*)." "The decision to write Luke-Acts is taken on his own responsibility."

22   Alexander 2000: 163 concludes: The "address to Theophilus is a convention, part of the recognized literary etiquette of the Graeco-Roman world," referring to Alexander 1993: 56–63. By contrast, Wolter 2009b: 488–89 emphasizes the exceptional character of the dedication at least in the frame of ancient historiography.

23   On a reconstruction of the first reading of Luke-Acts among Theophilus and friends, see Downing 1995: 109: "I would not now suppose Luke expected to have his work bought by or read to complete outsiders. He is entertaining and reassuring Theophilus and his Christian friends, not least reassuring them that their faith is both entertaining and eminently respectable." See also Kilgallen 2007: 251–55.

24   Contributions to the exegesis of Luke have long emphasized this connection, starting with Conzelmann's monograph (1954); see more recently, for example, Fitzmyer 1981: 18–22.

25   Pervo 2009: 44: "For Luke, universality meant first and foremost universalism."

26   See already Dibelius 1923. Surprisingly, the recent anthology edited by Frey et al. (2009) does not really touch upon this aspect.

27   See in general Dupont 1964 and, more recently, Fitzmyer 1998: 80–88, who also gives an overview of traditional and redactional elements in Acts (85–88), identifying mainly

three sources: e.g., 3:1–11; 4:1–22; 5:17–42; 8:5–25, 26–40 (Palestinian source); e.g., 6:1–7; 11:19–26 (Antiochene source), and, e.g., 9:1–19a, 19b–25, 26–30 (Pauline source). See also Barrett 1994: 49–56; 1998: xxiv–xxx, for example, for Acts 1–14: information about Philip (8:5–13, 26–40); information about Paul (9:1–19); stories about Peter (e.g., 9:32–43; 10:1–11:18); Antiochene tradition (11:19–26), etc. Because he dates Acts later (above n. 17), Pervo 2009: 12–14 also considers, for example, the writings of Josephus sources for Luke.

28 The genitive-object *Iēsou Christou* can be both an objective and subjective genitive.

29 The composition of Mark 1:1–3 should be understood largely as a redactional element, created by the author (or redactor) of Mark's Gospel; on the interpretation of the whole phrase, see now Becker 2009.

30 See Becker 2006: 16–20; also Yarbro Collins 2007: 2243 who defines Mark's Gospel as an "Eschatological Historical Monograph" (42).

31 On the early Jewish historians, see Holladay 1983.

32 To explain, according to one definition that focuses on this distinction, "historiography in the broader sense" includes those prose texts that are concerned in various genres and forms with the presentation of historical themes and events (e.g., biography, autobiography, or ethnography, or monographs on specific events), while "historiography in the narrower sense" designates an "especially highly developed form of historiography": Cancik 1991: 813–14.

33 See also Bradshaw-Aitken 2004. Generally, I do not think that these and similar texts have been evaluated sufficiently in relation to their parallels in Mark (14:22–25; 8:31). This needs to be done, however, in order to discover Paul's indications of how the Jesus-traditions were transmitted and used to construct early Christian history between Jesus and Mark's Gospel.

34 Paul, however, declares himself to be an "eyewitness" of the resurrected Christ (1 Cor 15:8: *ōphthē kamoi*).

35 E.g., 1 Thess 4:15–17 and Mark 13:26–27, Matthew 24:30–31; Rom 13:7 and Mark 12:17parr. to Matthew and Luke; Rom 14:14 and Mark 7:15. See also the list in Dunn 2003: 182 n. 47.

36 1 Cor 7:10–11; 9:14; 11:23–25. See, for example, Koester 1990: 52–55; Dunn 2003: 181.

37 Hengel 2004: 115–16, 126: "Bei Paulus läßt sich so ein kleines – aber entscheidendes – Stück der Chronologie Jesu nachweisen" (126). See also Lindemann 2008: 290.

38 Matthew 26:26–28; Luke 22:19–20. This is true at least in general terms even if we can determine more similarities between Paul and Luke on the one hand and between Mark's and Matthew's version on the other. I cannot enter this discussion here.

39 *Contra*: Kelber 1983: 206: "The eucharistic tradition … is most likely a liturgical formulation originating in the church of either Jerusalem or Antioch."

40 Theissen 2002: 29–31. See also, for example, Koester 1990: 286 who in regard to the literary genesis of Mark's Gospel follows the form-critical distinctions between "miracle stories," "sayings," and the "passion narrative." Concerning the social classification of those who transmitted the Jesus-traditions (disciples, communities, folk), see, for example, Theissen 2007: 49–52.

41 Dewey 2005: 127. Besides recalling Jesus's death and finding a "location in which one can perform the craft of memory" (ibid.), the formation of the passion narrative certainly also served the interpretation of Jesus's death.

42 Such as the stories of Jesus's appearances (1 Cor 15:5–11; also, for example, Luke 24:36–49) and the "empty tomb story" (Mark 16:1–8parr.): Barnett 1999: 195–214.

According to Barnett (203–4), among others, especially the Jerusalem community had defined traditions (1 Cor 11:23–25, 15:3b–5) and formulated a "narrative of Jesus's last days" (Mark 11–16). I am not sure to what extent the collection of "the oracles and acts of the Lord" (1 Thess 4:15 [Matthew 24:30]; 1 Cor 9 [Matthew 10, Luke 9]; Rom 10 [Luke 6]; 1 Cor 7:10–11; 1 Cor 9:14; 1 Cor 13:2 [Mark 11:23]; Rom 14:14 [Mark 7:15]) also took place in that community. Barnett, however, concludes: "Thus it cannot be doubted that by the time of the earliest letters by Paul, by c. 50, a collection or collections of teachings of Jesus were in existence, in all probability in written form" (206). The passion narrative was probably already "composed in Jerusalem in the first generation after Jesus' death, ca. 30–60 CE" (Theissen 1991: 198). "The Passion account is a conflict parenesis in the form of a narrative of remembered events" (ibid.).

43   Clay 1998: 75–76; cf. 64: "Their life together was commemorated as their philosophy was tested by illness and finally by death."

44   Insofar as the practice of the "Eucharist" serves the development of a "cognitive memory"; see Keightley 2005: 144–47.

45   Jerusalem: thus in tendency also Hengel 2004: 121, even if he considers it possible that Paul celebrated the Lord's Supper first in Damascus. I do not think, therefore, that 1 Cor 11:23–25 should simply be understood as a "kultgebundene Einzelüberlieferung" (J. Becker 1992: 121). Passion narrative: Hengel 2004: 126; see also Lindemann 2008: 291: "So setzen die … zitierten Mahlworte ein Wissen um das Passionsgeschehen voraus, das über die bloße Kenntnis des Kreuzestodes Jesu hinausgeht." Any attempt at reconstructing the conversation of Peter and Paul or Paul's precise knowledge of Jesus-traditions (as, for example, by Bauckham 2006: 266–67) should, however, be rejected because the texts yield no further evidence supporting such speculations.

46   Hengel and Schwemer 1998: 233 think that this *paradosis* was formulated during Paul's visit to Jerusalem.

47   Obviously, those traditions are in a later stage transmitted further, for example, to Luke (*paradidōmi*, Luke 1:2), see below.

48   Cf. 1 Cor 15:3b and 11:23a, on which see below.

49   See also Lindemann: 2008: 294: "Die … zitierte Formel spricht vom Tod und der Auferweckung Jesu; weiteres Wissen über den vorösterlichen Jesu läßt sie nicht erkennen." Unless we consider the first prediction of Jesus's suffering in Mark 8:31 a Jesus-saying, we do not have any evidence to take such a tradition as a Jesus-tradition. Generally, this is assumed neither in current exegesis of Mark nor in research on the historical Jesus; see, for example, Yarbro Collins 2007: 405: "It is … likely that the saying is a Markan composition … It … predicts in summarizing detail what will be narrated in chaps. 14–16 and thus unifies the narrative as a whole."

50   On the interpretation of Jesus's death as the death of a martyr, see Theissen and Merz 2001: 387–414. For criticism of this perspective, see Herrmann 2010: esp. 383–87. Furthermore, one has to distinguish here between the variety of interpretations of Jesus's death (e.g., Carroll and Green 1995) on the one hand and, on the other, the early Christian idea of suffering and dying for Jesus, that is perhaps based on "cosmic conflicts" (Middleton 2006; van Henten and Avemarie 2002: 88–131) and that might already occur in the Pauline letters as well as the Gospel literature. On the interrelation in church history between remembering martyrdom and the construction of Christian identity, see Leemans 2005.

51   I am thereby modifying Bradshaw-Aitken 2004: 54: In "1 Corinthians some of the morphological elements belonging to the poetics of the passion come into view."

52   In evaluating historicity, the proposed "formation-date" of a tradition can only be used as a "negative criterion," that is, to question historicity, not to establish it.

53   Ultimately, in the context of writing a letter to the community in Corinth, Paul tries to strengthen his apostolic authority by referring to a Jerusalem tradition: in 1 Cor 1–2 we find evidence for conflicts among parties in Corinth (Paulus, Apollos, Cephas, Christ: 1 Cor 1:12). Hence presumably Paul's effort in 1 Cor 11 and 15 to refer to the *paradoseis* of the Jerusalem community is intended to strengthen his authority in his conflict with Peter.

54   And "he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

55   In 1:1 Luke makes quite clear that his work is based on earlier Gospel narratives (*diēgēsis*), such as that of Mark (v. 1: *polloi epecheirēsan*). Luke's historiographical approach thus stands in the tradition of an already existing prehistoriographical form of arranging and composing Jesus-traditions chronologically (*anōthen*) and narratologically. This form was initiated by the author of Mark's Gospel. In 1:2, Luke claims that his writing relies on eyewitnesses (*ap' archēs autoptai kai hypēretai*, v. 2). Luke 1:2 offers insight into the process of transmitting early Christian traditions (*paradidōmi*; see, for example, Bovon 2002: 20–21) and thus continues the Pauline *paradosis*-terminology of the formation of Gospel-traditions. In comparison to the usage of the word *parakoloutheō* in Josephus's writings (e.g., *BJ* 1:455; *Ant* 14:438; *cAp* 1:53; 2:5), in Luke 1:3 the lexeme does not refer to a third generation Christian: "Luke is either presenting himself as a *contemporary* who stayed actively informed about Jesus and his followers …, *or* as one who, being an informed, 'credential' reader of 'all' the events and traditions in the narration of the 'many' others, has an *immediate comprehension or valuation* of their significance" (Moessner 1996: 122).

56   In his Gospel narrative, however, Luke is obviously able to refer to earlier writings such as Mark. Thus he can also be much more explicit about his historical materials, historiographical methods, and aims.

57   See also van Gorps and Musarra-Schroeder 2000 and esp., for example, Hendrix 2000.

58   These conditions are much more obvious in the case of Paul's letters than in an anonymous text like that of Mark, which can nevertheless be connected with the events around circa 70: Becker 2005a.

References

Alexander, L.C.A. 1993. *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1.* Cambridge.

Alexander, L.C.A. 2000. "What if Luke had never Met Theophilus?" *Biblical Interpretation* 8: 161–70.

Assmann, J. 1992. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen.* Munich.

Assmann, J. 2000. *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis. Zehn Studien.* Munich.

Barnett, P. 1999. *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times.* Downer's Grove, IL.

Barrett, C.K. 1994. *The Acts of the Apostles,* I: *Preliminary Introduction and Commentary on Acts I–XIV.* Edinburgh.

Barrett, C.K. 1998. *The Acts of the Apostles,* II: *Introduction and Commentary on Acts XV–XXVIII.* Edinburgh.

Bauckham, R. 2006. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses. The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony.* Grand Rapids and Cambridge.

Baumgarten, A.I. 2007. "Josephus on Ancient Jewish Groups from a Social Scientific Perspective." In S.J.D. Cohen and J.J. Schwartz (eds.), *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism: Louis H. Feldman Jubilee Volume*, 1–13. Leiden.

Becker, E.-M. (ed.). 2005a. *Die antike Historiographie und die Anfänge der christlichen Geschichtsschreibung.* Berlin.

Becker, E.-M. 2005b. "Autobiographisches bei Paulus. Aspekte und Aufgaben." In Becker and P. Pilhofer (eds.), *Biographie und Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, 67–87. Tübingen.

Becker, E.-M. 2006. *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie.* Tübingen.

Becker, E.-M. 2009. "Mk 1:1 and the Debate on a 'Markan Prologue'." *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 22: 91–106.

Becker, E.-M. 2010. "Religion and Historiography: Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus' *Bellum Iudaicum* 2.258–263 and the Gospel of Mark 6.14–16; 8.27–30." In T. Brüggemann, B. Meissner, C. Mileta, et al. (eds.), *Studia Hellenistica et Historiographica. Festschrift für Andreas Mehl*, 143–58. Gutenberg.

Becker, E.-M. 2011a. "Dating Mark and Matthew as Ancient Literature." In Becker and A. Runesson (eds.), *Mark and Matthew,* I: *Comparative Readings: Understanding the Earliest Gospels in their First-Century Settings*, 123–43. Tübingen.

Becker, E.-M. 2011b. "Historiographical Literature in the New Testament Period (1st and 2nd Centuries CE)." In T. Holmen and S.E. Porters (eds.), *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus,* II: *The Study of Jesus*, 1787–1817. Leiden.

Becker, J. 1992. *Paulus. Der Apostel der Völker.* 2nd edn. Tübingen.

Beckman, G. 2005. "The Limits of Credulity (Presidential Address)." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 125: 343–52.

Bickerman, E.J. 2007. "The Name of the Christians." In Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History: A New Edition in English Including* The God of the Maccabees, II: 794–808. Ed. A. Tropper. Leiden.

Bovon, F. 2002. *Luke,* 1: *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50.* Minneapolis.

Bovon, F. 2003. "The Apostolic Memories in Ancient Christianity." In Bovon, *Studies in Early Christianity*, 1–16. Tübingen.

Bradshaw-Aitken, E. 2004. *Jesus' Death in Early Christian Memory: The Poetics of the Passion.* Göttingen and Fribourg.

Cancik, H. 1991. "Geschichtsschreibung." *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* 1: 813–22.

Cancik, H. 1997. "The History of Culture, Religion, and Institutions in Ancient Historiography": Philological Observations concerning Luke's History." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116: 673–95.

Cancik, H. 2009. "Das Geschichtswerk des Lukas als Institutionsgeschichte. Die Vorbereitung des Zweiten Logos im Ersten." In Frey et al. 2009: 519–38.

Carroll, J.T., and J.B. Green. 1995. "The Gospels and the Death of Jesus in Recent Studies." In Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*, 3–22. Peabody.

Clay, D. 1998. *Paradosis and Survival: Three Chapters in the History of Epicurean Philosophy.* Ann Arbor.

Conzelmann, H. 1954. *Die Mitte der Zeit. Studien zur Theologie des Lukas.* Tübingen.

Dewey, A.J. 2005. "The Locus for Death: Social Memory and the Passion Narratives." In Kirk and Thatcher 2005: 119–28.

Dibelius, M. 1923. "Stilkritisches zur Apostelgeschichte." In *Eucharisterion für H. Gunkel*, II: 27–49. Göttingen. Repr. in Dibelius 1953: 9–28.

Dibelius, M. 1948. "Der erste christliche Historiker." *Schriften der Universität Heidelberg*, 3. Heft: *Aus der Arbeit der Universität 1946–47*, 112–25. Heidelberg. Repr. in Dibelius 1953: 108–19.

Dibelius, M. 1953. *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*. Ed. H. Greeven. 2nd edn. Berlin.

Dinkler, E. 1967. "The Idea of History in Earliest Christianity." In Dinkler, *Signum Crucis: Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament und zur Christlichen Archäologie*, 313–50. Tübingen.

Donfried, K.P. 2002. *Paul, Thessalonica, and Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids and Cambridge.

Dormeyer, D. 2009. "Die Gattung der Apostelgeschichte." In Frey et al. 2009: 437–75.

Downing, F.G. 1995. "Theophilus's First Reading of Luke-Acts." In C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays*, 91–109. Sheffield.

Dunn, J.D.G. 2003. *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*, I. Grand Rapids and Cambridge.

Dupont, J. 1964. *The Sources of Acts: The Present Position*. London.

Elliott, J.K. 1997. "Mark and the Teaching of Jesus. An Examination of LOGOS and EUAGGELION." In W.L. Petersen, J.S. Vos, and H.K. de Jonge (eds.), *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical. Essays in Honour of T. Baarda*, 37–45. Leiden.

Fitzmyer, J.A. 1981. *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Garden City, NY.

Fitzmyer, J.A. 1998. *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York.

Frey, J., C.K. Rothschild, and J. Schröter (eds.). 2009. *Die Apostelgeschichte im Kontext antiker und frühchristlicher Historiographie*. Berlin.

Head, P.M. 2004. "Papyrological Perspectives on Luke's Predecessors." In P.J. Williams, A.D. Clarke, P.M. Head et al. (eds.), *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B.W. Winter*, 30–45. Grand Rapids and Cambridge.

Hendrix, H. 2000. "Historiographical Anecdotes as Depositories and Vehicles of Cultural Memory." In van Gorps and Musarra-Schroeder 2000: 17–26.

Hengel, M. 2000. *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collections and Origin of the Canonical Gospels*. Harrisburg.

Hengel, M. 2004. "Das Mahl in der Nacht, 'in der Jesus ausgeliefert wurde' (1 Kor 11,23)." In C. Grappe (ed.), *Le Repas de Dieu/Das Mahl Gottes*, 115–60. Tübingen.

Hengel, M., and A.M. Schwemer. 1998. *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien. Die unbekannten Jahre des Apostels*. Tübingen.

Herrmann, F. 2010. *Strategien der Todesdarstellung in der Markuspassion. Ein literaturgeschichtlicher Vergleich*. Göttingen.

Holladay, C.R. (ed.). 1983. *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors,* I: *Historians*. Chico, CA.

Holmberg, B. 2008. "Understanding the First Hundred Years of Christian Identity." In Holmberg (ed.), *Exploring Early Christian Identity*, 1–32. Tübingen.

Humphries, M. 2006. *Early Christianity*. London.

Judge, E.A. 2008a. "Did the Churches Compete with Cult-groups?" In Judge, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, 597–618. Ed. J.R. Harrison. Tübingen.

Judge, E.A. 2008b. "Judaism and the Rise of Christianity: A Roman Perspective." In Judge, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays*, 431–41. Ed. J.R. Harrison. Tübingen.

Keightley, G.M. 2005. "Christian Collective Memory and Paul's Knowledge of Jesus." In Kirk and Thatcher 2005: 129–50.

Kelber, W. 1983. *The Oral and the Written Gospel. The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q.* Philadelphia.

Kilgallen, J.J. 2007. "Luke Wrote to Rome – A Suggestion." *Biblica* 88: 251–55.

Kirk, A. 2005. "Social and Cultural Memory." In Kirk and Thatcher 2005: 1–24.

Kirk, A., and T. Thatcher (eds.). 2005. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Atlanta.

Klumbies, P.-G. 2001. *Der Mythos bei Markus.* Berlin.

Koester, H. 1990. *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development.* London.

Leemans, J. (ed.). 2005. *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity.* Leuven.

Lindemann, A. 2008. "Paulus und die Jesustraditionen." In R. Buitenwerf, H.W. Hollander, and J. Tromp (eds.), *Jesus, Paul, and Early Christianity: Studies in Honour of Henk Jan de Jonge*, 281–316. Leiden.

Luz, U. 2007. *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary.* Minneapolis.

Marguerat, D. 2002. *The First Christian Historian: Writing the Acts of the Apostles.* Cambridge.

Mehl, A. 2001. *Römische Geschichtsschreibung: Grundlagen und Entwicklungen. Eine Einführung.* Stuttgart.

Middleton, P. 2006. *Radical Martyrdom and Cosmic Conflict in Early Christianity.* London.

Minois, G. 1998. *Geschichte der Zukunft. Orakel, Prophezeiungen, Utopien, Prognosen.* Düsseldorf and Zürich.

Moessner, D.P. 1996. "'Eyewitnesses,' 'Informed Contemporaries,' and 'Unknowing Inquirers': Josephus' Criteria for Authentic Historiography and the Meaning of *parakoloutheō*." *Novum Testamentum* 38: 105–22.

Molthagen, J. 2009. "Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsverständnis in der Apostelgeschichte im Vergleich mit Herodot, Thukydides und Polybios." In Frey et al. 2009: 159–81.

Müller, A. 2009. "Eusebs Rezeption der Apostelgeschichte in der *Vita Constantini*." In Frey et al. 2009: 393–417.

Pervo, R.I. 2009. *Acts: A Commentary.* Minneapolis.

Reasoner, M. 1999. "The Theme of Acts: Institutional History of Divine Necessity in History?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118: 635–59.

Still, T.D. 1999. *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and its Neighbours.* Sheffield.

Theissen, G. 1991. *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition.* Minneapolis.

Theissen, G. 2002. *Das Neue Testament.* Munich.

Theissen, G. 2007. *Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments als literaturgeschichtliches Problem.* Akad. Heidelberg, phil.-hist. Kl. 40. Heidelberg.

Theissen, G, and A. Merz, 2001. *Der historische Jesus. Ein Lehrbuch.* 3rd edn. Göttingen.

Ulrich, J. 2005. "Eusebius als Kirchengeschichtsschreiber." In Becker 2005a: 277–87.

van Gorps, H., and U. Musarra-Schroeder (eds.). 2000. *Genres as Repositories of Cultural Memory.* Amsterdam and Atlanta.

van Henten, J.W., and F. Avemarie. 2002. *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity.* London.

Wischmeyer, O. 2009. "Criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman Sources: Charges and Apologetics (Second Century BC to Second Century AD)." In A.-C. Jacobsen, J. Ulrich, and D. Brakke (eds.), *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity*, 59–83. Frankfurt.

Wischmeyer, W. 2005. "Wahrnehmungen von Geschichte in der christlichen Literatur zwischen Lukas und Eusebius. Die chronographische Form der Bischofslisten." In Becker 2005a: 263–76.

Wischmeyer, W. 2011. "Christliche Märtyrer. Die besonderen toten heiligen Männer und Frauen der Antike." In M. Rothgangel and H. Schwarz (eds.), *Götter, Heroen, Heilige. Von römischen Göttern bis zu Heiligen des Alltags*, 31–41. Frankfurt.

Wyschogrod, E. 2001. "Memory, History, Revelation." In M.A. Signer (ed.), *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism*, 19–34. Notre Dame.

Wolter, M. 2009a. "Das lukanische Doppelwerk als Epochengeschichte." In Wolter, *Theologie und Ethos im frühen Christentum. Studien zu Jesus, Paulus und Lukas*, 261–89. Tübingen.

Wolter, M. 2009b. "Die Proömien des lukanischen Doppelwerks (Lk 1,1–4 und Apg 1, 1–2)." In Frey et al. 2009: 476–94.

Yarbro Collins, A. 2007. *Mark: A Commentary*. Minneapolis.

15

Byzantine *historia*

Stratis Papaioannou

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that Byzantium was a culture fixated on history.[1] Or that, indeed, this predominantly Greek-speaking empire which continued the tradition of Roman imperial rule in the eastern Mediterranean from the fourth until the seventh century CE and then from the eighth to the fifteenth century in Asia Minor, the southern Balkans, and, partly, southern Italy and northern Syria, was fixated on multiple histories. Byzantium inherited and continually revisited versions of the past produced by earlier Greco-Roman culture. Simultaneously, by gradually becoming a Christian empire (the first of its kind), Byzantium acquired a new dominant idiom: the Judeo-Christian handling of history, time, and memory. I say "idiom" because I understand history to be the transformation of the past into narratives, images, and ritual: a past objectified, defining identities and cultural habits, and, at once, a subjective past, remembered, adopted, rejected, or forgotten.

To explore the Byzantine thinking, recording, and writing of history is thus to explore Byzantine culture itself, which would be an enormous task. The present contribution will rather limit itself to a brief presentation of three aspects of history in Byzantium: (a) notions and practices of historical memory, (b) the historiographical tradition, and (c) fragments of personal histories.

History without Historians

History, whether that of a group or an individual, is usually neither written by historians nor learned by reading history books (cf. Liakos 2007). This is especially the case in premodern societies such as Byzantium. We should remember that historiography reached a somewhat wider audience only very recently in nineteenth-century Europe, and even then never matched the popularity of other types of narrative, such as novels (cf. Gay 1995: 185–221). The past became history in Byzantium by other means. John of Damascus, a Byzantine writer in eighth-century Palestine and a popular author in later centuries, suggested, for instance, that "images [*eikones*]" performed precisely such a function. Images brought "past events to memory [*mnēmē*]" and rendered the past "beneficial" to the present. By "images," John of Damascus understood two things: first, narratives, especially of "god-loving men," and, second, images in material form for the sake of "vision available to the senses" (*Orationes de imaginibus tres* 3.23; ed. Kotter 1975).

These two types of "images" indeed define the construction of Byzantine historical memory. Narratives of exemplary virtuous men, whether Biblical stories (cf. Magdalino and Nelson 2010) or saints' *Lives* (cf. Odorico and Agapitos 2004), comprised the most important, widely known, and influential type of *historical* discourse in Byzantium. These texts were indeed "images" in the sense that, unlike modern biographies, they presented mostly a series of stylized scenes, brief anecdotes of memorable words and acts that displayed idealized models of behavior (cf. Messis 2004). Each Byzantine Christian was, to some extent, already marked by these behavioral models through the simple act of receiving a name. Popular Byzantine personal names, such as Ioannes, Michael, Konstantinos, Leon, Basileios, and Theodoros for men, and Maria, Eirene, and Theodora for women, inscribed a certain biblical (Ioannes, Michael, and Maria), Christian imperial (Konstantinos, Leon, Basileios), and martyrological (Theodoros, Eirene, and Theodora) memory into one's personal identity.[2] After all, the Byzantines built some of their closest relationships with heavenly patrons, all figures of an idealized past, as is attested by countless Byzantine stories, devotional objects, and the thousands of personal seals (more than 40,000; see Oikonomidès 1985).

Images in the sense of material representations, such as statues, holy relics, and icons, were also, if not more so, matrices of Byzantine historical memory. Constantinople, the capital of the empire and, especially after the eighth century, its most important urban center, was from its inception designed as a visual depository of memory. As our sources tell us, Constantine the Great gathered statues from around the empire in order to decorate the public and imperial spaces of his City. This is a practice that continued well into late antiquity, rendering Constantinople a kind of *city-museum* of Greco-Roman culture, an actual *New Rome*, as the Byzantines came to conceptualize it (Magdalino 2002; Bassett 2004). In the same period and increasingly in later centuries, Constantinople became the depository also of holy

relics, the material remains of saintly figures, and of icons whose role in the formation of Byzantine history cannot be emphasized enough.

Relics and icons – especially the miraculous ones – made history present in a literal way. Such objects (if one can indeed call them "objects") defined the landscape of urban and private spaces. They affected profoundly the Byzantines who led their lives within the overwhelming and validating visual horizon of the past displayed by such images. In fact, in Byzantine Greek, the word *historia* had built into its semantic field the emphasis on visual sense-perception. *Historia* could simply mean "painted picture," "image," or "sight"; such is, for instance, the definition offered in the tenth-century encyclopedic lexicon known as the *Suda* (*iota* 696–700; ed. Adler 1928–1935). Similarly, in Byzantine science, the physiology of memory was defined by its processing of images, stored at the back of the human brain and restored through recollection or *ana-mnēsis* (so, for example, John of Damascus in his *Precise Exposition* 34, ed. Kotter 1973, following Aristotelian notions).

But memory was not only visualized through discursive and material "images." It was also, as the Byzantines might say, "performed (*ektelein*)." Throughout the year, often many times in a single day, in imperial, ecclesiastic, monastic, and lay ceremony, the Byzantines were encouraged to participate directly in history. In this sense, history included not just the past. Rather, history was time reorganized, the "now and forever and into the ages of ages" – the most repeated *formula* of Byzantine ritual speech – in which past, present, and future were all seen to exist simultaneously and harmoniously. Indeed, the most important memory incited by Byzantine images and ritual was, somewhat counterintuitively for us, the *memory of the future*, both personal and communal. I refer to the "memory of death" (a recurrent theme in Byzantine moral discourse, as in the popular sixth-century *Ladder* of Ioannes, ch. 6; ed. Migne 1860), the memory of the "future judgment" (*Ladder* of Ioannes, ch. 26), and, ultimately, the "memory" of God – both in the sense that God is to be remembered and that we may be remembered by God.

It is instructive to linger for a moment on this "memory" of God because its conceptualization by Byzantine writers suggests some of the mechanics of historical memory in Byzantium. According to passages included in the so-called *Sacra Parallela*, an anthology of patristic writing ascribed to John of Damascus, the primary function of memory is to render the human subject a "dwelling" of God (Migne 1864: 1357; 1891: 180). Rather than a recapturing of time and thus a management of temporality, memory was seen in Byzantium as a moral act with spatial effects. Memory could be regarded as a space, created through proper behavior and inhabited anew by individual subjects, a *topos* where temporality disappears (cf. further Messis 2006: 107–11).

It goes without saying that historical memory was neither homogeneous nor monolithic either during the Byzantine millennium or within disparate sections of Byzantine society (Papalexandrou 2010; Grünbart 2011). Different contexts and settings demanded and commanded diverging memories through their own registers of discourse, images, and ritual. For instance, institutions like the state, the patriarchate, and the monasteries kept archives, written records of transactions that

constructed defining aspects of their particular histories – in their overwhelming majority, these archives are unfortunately lost to us. Private wills (of which few survive) of wealthy aristocrats also created such histories, in this case personalized ones (for a significant example, see the testament of Eustathios Boilas, dated to April 1059, that survives in *Paris. Coisl. gr.* 263 and contains elements of personal history; ed. Lemerle 1977: 14–63).

Byzantine education, a somewhat less institutionalized affair, had its own version of *historia*. Unlike its modern counterpart and as in most premodern societies, Byzantine schooling did not involve instruction in history in any straightforward and consistent fashion. Indeed, few are the Byzantine historiographical texts that can be identified as equivalent to modern history textbooks. Psellos's eleventh-century *Historia Syntomos*, namely *A Concise History*, is one such rare example, written for a very particular audience, most likely a young prince (ed. Aerts 1990; cf. Duffy and Papaioannou 2003).

In its most dominant version in Byzantine educational writing, *historia* carried rather different meanings. Firstly, *historia* denoted a brief narrative of an event thought to have occurred in the distant, often mythological, past. Such brief narratives demanded explanation by the teacher; surviving Byzantine school commentaries on important texts often explain such *historiai* – such as the several commentaries on Gregory of Nazianzus's *Orations* and *Poems* (Sajdak 1914), for instance the commentary attributed to the eighth-century writer Kosmas of Jerusalem (*Collection and Interpretation of the Histories* [historiai], *from both the Divinely Inspired Scripture and the Pagan Poets and Writers, Mentioned by the Divine Gregory in his Writings in Verse*; ed. Lozza 2000). These stories could be learned by the student and replicated in his own future writing as a sign of learnedness (see Eustathios of Thessalonike, *Prologue to the Notes on Pindar* 7, ed. Kambylis 1991). Secondly, a more extended meaning of this kind of *historia* defined the term as the literal meaning of narratives, such as biblical and mythological stories, that required allegorical interpretation (e.g., Michael Psellos, *Theologica* I 72; ed. Gautier 1989). Allegory, in this context, encouraged the ideal reader to strip narratives from their temporality and reposition them among eternal, unchanging truths.

Thirdly, *historia* in Byzantine education indicated ancient historiography, especially that produced by the three canonical authors Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon (see Theodoros Metochites' *That Everything Concerning the Greeks has been Preserved for us in Memory and Writing*; ed. Agapitos, Hult, and Smith 1996). Though not as important as Demosthenes or Gregory of Nazianzus, these historians continued to be read by Byzantine students.[3] Indeed, we owe their very survival to Byzantine readers and copyists. Rather than sources for the knowledge of the past, these *historiai* attracted attention as a way by which to learn a certain style. Along with Plato and, perhaps surprisingly, Homer (see Hermogenes, *On Forms* 2.12, *On Panegyrical Discourse*; ed. Rabe 1913), classical historiography supplied the Byzantines with a high rhetoric of narrative in which the distinction between fact and fiction was less important than the

method of discursive representation itself (for comparable trends in western medieval Europe, see von Moos 1976; Morse 1991).

Byzantine Historiography

If history "texts" *per se* did not feature prominently in education or in the larger production of historical memory, what can we say about the Byzantine historiographical tradition? For we do possess a large number of historiographical texts written in Greek during the 1100 years of Byzantium with little interruption in the chain of the historiographical record. Approximately 50 extensive histories, another 15 in fragments, and around 100 smaller accounts survive, and we know that many more existed.[4] This is quite a significant corpus and deserves, therefore, some detailed attention here.[5]

One may distinguish two general types of history writing in Byzantium, divided by the level of Greek employed and by their thematic preoccupations. The two types are conventionally termed "histories" and "chronicles," a distinction known, though not always consistently followed, by Byzantine authors and readers. The former type, histories, pertains to classicizing history that traced its roots back to Thucydides. Its most important specimens date to the sixth century and then from the mid-tenth to, more or less, the fall of Constantinople in 1453. These are histories written in archaizing language, offering comprehensive accounts of events that were recent or contemporary with the historian's own life. Chronicles, by contrast, were often written in a lower register of Greek with links to the spoken language, and provided accounts of *universal* history. This was history of the whole of humanity in an eschatological framework, following the model of ecclesiastical Christian historiography of the fourth century, itself an offshoot of the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition, and using a variety of sources, most importantly the Old Testament. These chronicles traced human history from the creation of the world – an event which, by the end of the tenth century, the Byzantines consistently dated to the year 5508 BCE (see Grumel 1958: 98–128) – to its culmination in the Christian Roman empire of their present.[6] The boundaries, of course, between the two genres were rather porous. Especially after the middle of the tenth century, histories and chronicles converged in their emphasis on the acts of specific personalities (usually emperors) and thus came to resemble biographies and encomia, following again ancient models (Markopoulos 2009).

If we examine this tradition as a whole, certain prominent features emerge. First of all, even if some Byzantine historical texts addressed, or were even commissioned by, an emperor, none of them may be regarded as "official" history, commissioned and strictly controlled by larger entities such as the state, church, or monasteries, or even the schools. Nor were any of these texts written by professional historians, that is to say, by individuals employed specifically to write history. Rather, these texts were usually the bywork of scholars who either came from the aristocratic ranks of Byzantine society and had a career away from the imperial court as bishops (for example,

Eusebius of Caesarea, the so-called father of Byzantine ecclesiastical history in the fourth century) and abbots (such as Theophanes the Confessor in the early ninth century) or, as is the case with the majority of them, were learned members of the imperial administration – or even, in the case of Anna Komnene in the twelfth century, an emperor's daughter. Most of these historians wrote their histories while on the periphery of the ruling Constantinopolitan court elite to whose inner circle they aspired to belong and to whom they often addressed their works.

We are thus dealing with a more or less cohesive group of historians, a cohesion reflected in certain shared aspects: for instance, the thematic emphasis on the life of the Byzantine state, whether in the capital or in the military campaigns of emperors at the frontiers, and the identification of the fate of Christianity with imperial Roman history – this latter feature derived from Byzantine ideological and practical reality in which the church was largely part of the state apparatus. In this frame, the everyday Byzantine person or the Byzantines of the provinces are largely absent. Shared were also two overlapping historiographical concerns. One was to preserve memory and record events as truthfully, accurately, and objectively as possible – a recurrent claim of Byzantine historians. The second was to reorganize history within moral frameworks and episodic story-telling that highlighted or, for that matter, invented good and bad historical *figures* or, in more sophisticated cases, good and bad *actions*, blurring the boundaries between history and encomium or invective.

But cohesion should not be misunderstood as uniformity. Indeed, at a closer look, Byzantine historiography is marked by diverging individual choices and their remarkable variety. This may be explained by the fact that no particular institution (not even the school curriculum!) lay behind Byzantine historians. A certain level of freedom from tradition was thus encouraged by the system. Byzantine histories may navigate between myth-making and myth-breaking. They aim at the former through encomium or teleological views of time. They gesture to the latter by alerting the reader to the impact of rhetoric on history-writing (Papaioannou 2010), by their consciousness of the limitations of earlier sources, or by deconstructing the aura of imperial power (Magdalino 1983).[7]

What about the audience of these texts? We might try to answer this question by looking at the manuscript transmission and, more widely, the presence of Byzantine historiography within what once was a vibrant book culture. What immediately strikes the modern reader who approaches Byzantine historians from the perspective of the manuscripts is how few of their texts are widely represented in what survives from Byzantium's book culture (around 60,000 Greek books, dating from the ninth to the sixteenth century are extant in modern libraries).[8] As Hans Georg Beck once remarked in an important survey (1961: 426–50), we are confronted with a "transmission in ruins: *eine ruinöse Überlieferung*." The overwhelming majority of the fifty or so full historiographical accounts that we possess survive in very few manuscripts, in many cases in just one single manuscript (Snipes 1989). Also, with few exceptions, manuscripts with historiographical content did not belong to the most expensively produced Byzantine books – the famous twelfth-century *Madrid*

Skylitzes and its 574 illustrations to episodes narrated in the eleventh-century *Chronicle* of Ioannes Skylitzes is exceptional in more than one way (see, for example, Boeck 2003).[9]

Of course, we must take into consideration the limitations imposed on the circulation and survival of premodern texts in general. For instance, we know of the effort to collect and rearrange in encyclopedic fashion the historiography of the classical, Roman imperial, Byzantine Greek tradition, an effort initiated by those within the inner circle of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos in the middle of the tenth century. This work must have resulted in several books, of which, unfortunately, we now possess only minimal traces (Gaul 2010: 76). Still, it is apparent that relatively few of the historiographical texts mentioned above reached a wider audience. Often, for instance during the Middle Byzantine period, it seems as if the producers and the recipients, authors and readers, of some of these historiographical accounts were more or less the same group of people.

Yet there are important exceptions: some histories (especially chronicles) were indeed popular. At least one of these deserves special mention here because it shows a certain aspect of the predilections of the Byzantine and much post-Byzantine readership as far as written history is concerned. I am referring to the *Synopsis Chronikē*, literally a *Synopsis of Years* (or *of Time*). This universal chronicle, narrating events from Adam to 1081, was written by Konstantinos Manasses in the middle of the twelfth century and is preserved in about 120 manuscripts. Half of these are Byzantine, to which we should add a vernacular Byzantine paraphrase and an illustrated fourteenth-century Bulgarian translation (*Vaticanus slav.* 2 with 69 miniatures, dated to 1344–45; Boeck 2007, with bibliography). This was a popular text. Is it a coincidence that Manasses' chronicle also happens to be the most *literary* of Byzantine histories, written in fifteen-syllable verse, the verse of most low-register Byzantine poetry, and exhibiting all the features such as metaphors, themes, motifs, and diction of high rhetorical and fictional Byzantine discourse? This was a historiographical account that could provide entertainment through its fine eloquence (consistent with the increasing rhetoricization of history-writing in the middle Byzantine period, especially after the eleventh century) and a history text that could also be easily memorized, and thus offered basic historical knowledge in a handy format. Verse, we should note, was in Byzantium a primary means of capturing and organizing memory and reenlivening or, even, reliving the past.[10] Hence, we might assume, the success of Manasses.

Let us look at a few manuscripts with historiographical content in order to identify some further trends in the construction of historical memory within the frame of Byzantine book culture. There were, it is clear, books designed as depositories of exclusively historiographical texts. Three important examples of this kind may be instructive here. The first is the *Parisinus gr.* 1711, an early eleventh-century manuscript. As Ronconi (2010) has convincingly argued, the first manuscript was completed by an unknown scribe in July of 1013 and included, in its original sequence, George Synkellos's *Selection from Chronographers* (annals from the creation of the world to 284, Diocletian's reign), Theophanes the Confessor's

Chronographia (which continued Synkellos's text to the year 813), the so-called *Scriptor Incertus de Leone Armenio* (on the years 811–816), and a particular version of the *Chronicle* of Symeon Logothetes by a certain *grammatikos* called Leo (this version includes the last chapters of Symeon's *Chronicle*, covering the years from 813 to 948); some time after 1013, the same scribe added the oldest version of the *Life of Alexander*, the so-called *Alexander Romance* (*Recensio* A: ed. Kroll 1926), while, in the twelfth century, the book was restored by two further scribes who added at its beginning pages from the *Concise History* of the patriarch Nikephoros (an alternative narrative for the years 602 to 769). The second manuscript, the late-twelfth-century *Parisinus gr.* 1712 (Panagiotakis 1965; Snipes 1991), contained, in its original composition, three historical works that covered the years from the creation of the world to the reign of Michael VII Doukas in 1071–1078: an anonymous chronicle known as the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon* (from the creation of the world to the mid-tenth century), Leo the Deacon's *History* (years 959 to 976), and Michael Psellos's *Chronographia* (from 976 to 1075). Finally, the late-thirteenth-century *Vaticanus gr.* 163 (Mercati and de' Cavalieri 1923: 185–87) contains five historiographical works: an anonymous universal chronicle (from Adam to the mid-tenth century), Manasses' *Synopsis* (from the creation of the world to the late eleventh century), a version of Niketas Choniates' *Temporal Narrative* (from 1118 to 1204, the year of the Fourth Crusade), Ioannes Kinnamos's *History* (covering the years of 1118 to 1176), and the *Temporal Writing* by George Akropolites (from 1204 to 1261).

These were thus books that offered to their compilers and readers more or less complete narratives from the beginning of time to their own present. In achieving such comprehensiveness, these books gathered together texts of very different character, style, and preoccupation: from the scientific work of George Synkellos to the fictional biography of Alexander the Great, from the versified chronicle of Manasses to the high-style Choniates and from the low-register Pseudo-Symeon to the rather idiosyncratic work of Psellos. Indeed, in order to make the collection gathered in *Paris.* 1712 fit the historiographical expectations of an average Byzantine reader, the character of Psellos's *Chronographia* was violated by the omission, likely for this very manuscript, of the preface to the work. We can safely assume that such a preface existed in the original version by Psellos; probably it explained Psellos's own conception of historiography which, as far as we can tell, was rather different from the two works to which his own was appended in the *Parisinus* (Papaioannou 2010). What is also striking about these three manuscripts is that they join more popular with rarer works. While only one among many manuscripts of Manasses (above), the Vatican manuscript is the single extant Byzantine testimony of Kinnamos's work. Similarly, *Paris.* 1712 is the single Byzantine book with the complete text of Leo the Deacon's as well as Psellos's histories, and *Paris.* 1711 is the single testimony of the *Scriptor incertus* and of Leo the *grammatikos*'s version of Symeon Logothetes' *Chronicle.*

A different picture emerges from another example. In addition to the *Chronographia* which is, by far, the Byzantine historical work best known to modern readers (it has

been translated into thirteen modern European languages), Psellos wrote a didactic chronicle called the *Historia Syntomos* (already mentioned above). This work too survives in a single manuscript, now in the collection of the Monastery of St. Catherine on the Sinai peninsula (ms. 1117 [482]; Kamil 1970). This fourteenth-century book is not a history manual but, rather, a collection of texts pertaining to ecclesiastical law. Psellos's didactic chronicle, which offers brief vignettes of Roman emperors from Romulus to Basil II (976–1025), occupies only a few pages (ff. 265r–276v) in the middle of the book, and it is one of a few brief and anonymous chronicles included in the Sinai manuscript. Here, historiographical texts supplement the contents of a book, without being its primary focus.[11]

The example of the survival of Psellos's chronicle is rather typical. For, as it seems, apart from some popular chronicles such as that of Manasses – itself surviving mostly in *non*historiographical manuscripts[12] – the most common form of historiographical texts in Byzantine book culture were brief chronicle-type accounts or historiographical fragments and excerpts, a large number of which remain unpublished as such. These texts were embedded in manuscript anthologies of varied character and we might assume that they existed in almost every decent Byzantine library; sometimes they retained their primary character as records of the historical past, while in other instances they acquired additional guises.

Two relevant examples will suffice here. The first regards a manuscript devoted to Alexander the Great: *Oxoniensis Bodl. Barocci* 17. The beginning of this book, written on parchment in the thirteenth century, contains another Byzantine version of the *Life of Alexander* (*Recensio* ε; ed. Trumpf 1974), a popular medieval fictional biography of the Macedonian king (Jouanno 2002). At a later time, further texts relevant to Alexander were appended on paper to this book, including a large excerpt from the *Chronicle* of George the Monk (mid-ninth century). Just as in *Paris.* 1711 fiction was attached to historiographical texts, so also in the Oxford manuscript historiography was adduced in the service of a narrative that overtly crosses the boundaries of history and myth. The phenomenon is consistent with a discursive culture in which narratives could satisfy simultaneously the needs of entertainment, rhetorical training, moral education, and knowledge of history (see Agapitos 2012 for a diachronic and comparative perspective).

The second example is from an early twelfth-century Constantinopolitan book of the *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* in Florence (*Plut. gr.* 57.40; see Papaioannou 2012). This manuscript, whose beginning and end are now missing, contains a collection of Michael Psellos's letters and some of his minor rhetorical works, in addition to a series of texts pertaining to the so-called schism of 1054 between the Constantinopolitan and the Roman Churches. At the end of what survives today of the manuscript (ff. 283v–286v), the compiler added a series of passages, excerpts from an anonymous chronicle which is very close in diction to the *Chronicle* of George the Monk. The content of these passages varies greatly. For instance, one on f. 284r is devoted to the Byzantine conception of the divinely ordered sequence of kingdoms: Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman, "the one to be dissolved by the Antichrist," namely at the end of Time.[13] The excerpt on the

last page of the manuscript (f. 286v) is about Mohammed and the appearance and early spread of Islam, which Byzantine chroniclers attributed to how easily the Prophet's wife believed that Mohammed was a Prophet, and then spread this belief among other Arab women. The story mirrored what Byzantine readers would have regarded as a prototypical story, namely the biblical narrative about Adam and Eve and the fall of humanity due to Eve's easy deception by the devil.

Immediately following this passage about Islam and without a very visible break in the page presentation (only a title in the margin signals the change in topic) the same scribe added a couple of prophylactic spells and prayers. The last of these is to be done in the case of "a woman in labor pains, [who is] unable to give birth." This is an "epigram," as the text tells us, that should be written on paper and attached to the right inner-thigh of the laboring woman. On this page, historiography and magic flow rather seamlessly toward each other into an amalgam that might seem incongruous to us today. However, from a Byzantine perspective, the joined bits of historiography and occult science would likely come as no surprise, as they seem to share a similar epistemic value. They provided morsels of rudimentary knowledge by which one may gain different types of control over one's own present – whether by adopting a communal identity based on a certain understanding of the past or by learning methods through which the supernatural can alter the course of the real.

History in the Margins

This intersection of the communal with the personal leads me to a few concluding thoughts on the handling of the past in Byzantium – this time the *personal* past. Various Byzantine discourses and ritual practices dealt with the preservation of *one's own* history. Byzantine medicine, for example, worried about the "loss of memory" (Leo Medicus, *Synopsis of Medicine* 2.15; ed. Ermerins 1840) and, occasionally, suggested remedies – an anonymous poem, attributed by some manuscripts to Michael Psellos (*Poem* 60.7–8; ed. Westerink 1992), suggests bathing as protective of memory and preventive of forgetfulness (cf. Volk 1990: 124–29; Agapitos 2004: 23), while a manual of the late eleventh century recommends the marrow and gall of egrets (Symeon Seth, *On the Powers of Foodstuff, gamma* 8–10; ed. Langkavel 1868). On a wider and more culturally influential scale, Byzantine Christian ritual focused on the preservation of the memory of the dead through prayer.

What about historiographical writing, though? It is not uncommon that a Byzantine historian might insert himself or herself in the forefront of the historio-graphical stage (Macrides 1996; Ljubarskij 1992); this is especially the case for the historiography of the late Byzantine period (a good example is the text of Georgios Sphrantzes, a chronicle-diary of the years 1413 to 1477). Admittedly, however, substantial self-referential narrative accounts are rare in Byzantium in comparison to other medieval cultures (for a survey: Hinterberger 1999). We possess no Byzantine text that comes close to our modern obsession with detailing personal histories through journals or diaries, a fashion that became prominent in western

Europe along with the appearance of a larger readership of historiographical texts. In the form we recognize it today, autobiography too is a modern phenomenon, though antecedents can be found in every premodern culture, including Byzantium (Misch 1949–1962, with the critique in Angold 1998; Reynolds 2001).

Rather than in extensive narrative, we must search in other forms of textual practices for the handling of personal history in Byzantium. Such a form were marginal book notes: *sēmeiōmata* and *enthymēseis*, as the Byzantines called them (Euangelatou-Notara 1982). Usually in their margins or final pages, Byzantine manuscripts contain numerous brief interventions by later readers or owners who recorded events of various kinds. A large number of these focus little on personal affairs but record instead contemporary events, usually relating to rulers (Schreiner 1975). This is the case, for instance, in several of the many *sēmeiōmata* we find in the collection of *Parisinus* 1711 (Ronconi 2010). These notes, dating from the end of the twelfth to the first half of the sixteenth century, document events and moments that mark the gradual collapse of the Byzantine empire and the concurrent and increasing competition between Venice and Ottoman Istanbul for the domination of the eastern Mediterranean world.[14]

Other such notes join communal memory with personal history. Take, for instance, a marginal comment in the *Vaticanus gr.* 163, the late thirteenth-century historiographical collection discussed above. Ioannes Chortasmenos, a scholar of the late Byzantine period (circa 1370–circa 1436/37; Hunger 1969) purchased this book in 1391 and, sometime between 1394 and 1402, recorded his lament over the contemporary Turkish siege of Constantinople on one of its pages (f. 233f.; Lampros 1908: 260–61): "As I write these pitiful words, Turks besiege Constantinople, having placed their besieging machines so close that they are just ten feet away from the trench, pelting incessantly the wall … Have mercy on us, oh Lord …"

Yet other notes introduce the reader to even more private accounts. Some are related to the ownership of the book. Such is, for example, a lengthy *enthymēsis* inserted in the Sinai manuscript with Psellos's *Historia Syntomos*: a fascinating history of a Byzantine book and its owner in the fifteenth-century Peloponnese, Crete, and Mount Sinai (Aerts 1990: xv–xviii): "I Joseph, at present a monk-priest, born and bred in the town of Mystra, as a lay man called Ioannes Phlebotomos …" and so on. Others deal with family histories. For instance, at the end of a thirteenth-century copy of the popular homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (*Parisinus gr.* 975A, f. 243; Mossay 1981: 75–76 for the date, contra Schreiner 1975: 620–21), a member of the Chrysoloras family, whose first name does not survive, recorded in several notes deaths and births in his family: the death of his father Konstantinos in 1347 and the birth of his four children, Konstantinos in 1348, Nikephoros in 1350, Euphrosyne in 1351, and of a second girl, whose name is not preserved on the page, in 1352. The note for this last child movingly records also the death of this man's daughter: "On the tenth of October, of the sixth indiction (the year 1352), my daughter ***, my fourth child, was born; and she died while an infant."

Such notes are marked by their brevity. They display a conciseness corresponding to the insistence on memorable stories around which larger historiographical texts as well as Byzantine collective memory were built. These brief notes are also marked by the underlying desire to inscribe private history into the imagined permanence of books; as a common colophon formula of Byzantine scribes argued, "The hand that wrote will rot, yet the writing will remain for a ripened age."[15] Ultimately, it is here, mostly in the margins of books, that the joyous and traumatic memories of a Byzantine person attempted, perhaps a bit feebly, to become memory and history, to enter the Byzantine *historia*.

Notes

1   My thanks to Kurt Raaflaub for the invitation to participate in this volume and the Brown Ancient Studies Conference of December 2008, from which this volume originates. I am also indebted to Charis Messis for his valuable comments.

2   For this data, based on 11th-c. sources, see the *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, at http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/ [accessed July 2013]. There, we encounter 929 persons by the name of Ioannes, 534: Michael, 524: Konstantinos, 374: Leon, 343: Basileios, and 342: Theodoros, along with 106: Maria, 69: Eirene, and 26: Theodora. Family names too (referring to place names, professions, virtues, or vices) would have added a sense of personal history. Present already in 9th-c. Byzantine sources, family names become regular after the year 1000 (Patlagean 1984; Cheynet 1996).

3   For one of the several examples of this continued interest, see the *Vaticanus gr.* 126, a manuscript with just the text of Thucydides accompanied by scholia, written in the second half of the 11th century for private usage; Follieri 1969: 37–39 and Table 23.

4   The number is larger if we would be willing to include historiographical traditions that, though written in other languages such as, say, Syriac and Armenian (cf. Debié 2009), could be defined as, at least from a certain perspective, "Byzantine."

5   For comprehensive discussions of the texts and scholarship, see Hunger 1978; Karpozilos 1997–2009; Treadgold 2007. For brief overviews, see Angold and Whitby 2008; Kaldellis 2010; Scott 2010; Bourbouhakis and Nilsson 2010: 265–69. For recent collections of interpretive studies, see Criscuolo and Maisano 2000; Odorico, et al. 2006; Macrides 2010.

6   To these universal chronicle accounts we should add popular brief pseudo-historical texts (such as the 8th-c. *Apocalypse* of Ps.-Methodios) which placed the history of humanity in a more pointed eschatological framework; see Alexander 1985.

7   Deconstruction may be a strong word here, since Byzantine historians, though critical of earlier emperors, never promoted large-scale ideological agendas. Only rarely and quite covertly did Byzantine writers criticize those in power in the immediate context of the publication of a text. Nikephoros Gregoras (circa 1292/1295–1358/1361), for instance, had to defend himself carefully from accusations that he criticized the emperor in a historiographical account as we learn from an unpublished text that survives in a Paris manuscript; *suppl. gr.* 1888 (Astruc and Concasty 1960: 357–358; where also the wrong suggestion that Michael Psellos was the likely author of this text).

8   Again, I do not include here manuscripts that, though they might be considered "Byzantine," were not written in Greek.

9 For some further examples of illuminated Byzantine historical mss., see Spatharakis 1976: 142–43.

10 Verse-inscriptions were ubiquitous on surfaces of all sorts in Byzantium such as walls, icons, books, seals, etc.; see Lauxtermann 2003; Bernard 2010; Drpić 2011. For the *literariness* of Manasses' *Synopsis*, see further Nilsson 2006; Reinsch 2006.

11 For similar legal collections that include chronicles, see the 16th-c. Vienna ms. *Hist. gr.* 24, in which various chronicle-type narratives are interspersed (Hunger 1961: 25–30), or the 11th-c. *Parisinus gr.* 1320, a parchment collection of canonical law to whose end sections from the late 8th-c. *Concise History* of the patriarch Nikephoros were added (Omont 1888: 2–3).

12 For two such examples, see the mss. *Oxoniensis Bodl. Barocci* 131 and *Monacensis gr.* 131, both written during the second half of the 13th century. The former is a rhetoro-philosophical collection (Manasses' text in ff. 447–474; see Wilson 1978), the latter a collection of rhetoric and, especially, poetry (Manasses' text in ff. 142–176; see Hardt 1806: 335–51).

13 With the appearance of the Ottomans, post-Byzantine chroniclers had to emend the sequence of kingdoms; see the 16th-c. *Chronicle* known as Ps.-Sphrantzes, *Chronicon Maius*, by Makarios Melissenos (ed. Grecu 1966: 462). In the early ninth century, the chronicler George Synkellos offers a more elaborate list of 15 kingdoms (though not all in temporal sequence): Chaldean, Assyrian, Median, Persian, Lydian, Hebrew, Egyptian, Athenian, Argive, Sicyonian, Lacedaemonian, Corinthian, Thessalian, Macedonian, and "Latin … later called Roman" (ed. Mosshammer 1984: 73).

14 For another type of marginal annotation in this same ms., see Odorico 2012. For marginal notation in general, see further Cavallo 2006: 67–82, 133–137.

15 For an example, see ms. Milan, *Ambros. B. 56 sup.*, a Gospel book dated to 1023 (f. 187r); Martini and Bassi 1906: 108–9. For a lengthier, more rhetorical version, see an anonymous *Poem* (223) in Maximos Planoudes' expanded *Palatine Anthology*, completed during the years 1299–1305 (ed. Cougny 1890: 328): "The hand that wrote this book / will, yes, disappear; / yet let the one who will receive this book … also remember me, even if I am by then already far away."

References

Adler, A. 1928–1935. *Suidae Lexicon*. 4 vols. Leipzig.

Aerts, W.J. (ed.). 1990. *Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos*. Berlin.

Agapitos, P.A. 2004. "Zwischen Grauen und Wonne. Das Bad in der byzantinischen Literatur." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 54: 19–37.

Agapitos, P.A. 2012. "In Rhomaian, Frankish and Persian Lands: Fiction and Fictionality in Byzantium." In Agapitos and L.B. Mortensen (eds.), *Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction: From the Centre to the Periphery of Europe, c. 1100–1400*. 235–367 Copenhagen.

Agapitos, P.A., K. Hult, and O.L. Smith (eds.). 1996. *Theodoros Metochites on Philosophic Irony and Greek History: Miscellanea 8 and 93*. Nicosia and Göteborg.

Alexander, P. 1985. *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*. Berkeley.

Angold, M. 1998. "The Autobiographical Impulse in Byzantium." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52: 225–57.

Angold, M., and M. Whitby. 2008. "Historiography." In E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon, and R. Cormack (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, 838–52. New York.

Astruc C., and M.-L. Concasty. 1960. *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs,* Ptie. 3: *Le supplément grec,* T. 3: *Nos 901–1371.* Paris.

Bassett, S. 2004. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople.* Cambridge.

Beck, H.G. 1961. "Überlieferungsgeschichte der byzantinischen Literatur." In H. Hunger (ed.), *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur*, I: 423–510. Zurich.

Bernard, F. 2010. *The Beats of the Pen: Social Contexts of Reading and Writing Poetry in Eleventh-Century Constantinople.* Ghent.

Boeck, E. 2003. *The Art of Being Byzantine: History, Structure, and Visual Narrative in the Madrid Skylitzes Manuscript.* Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University.

Boeck, E. 2007. "Displacing Byzantium, Disgracing Convention: The Manuscript Patronage of Tsar Ivan Alexander of Bulgaria." *Manuscripta* 51: 199–207.

Bourbouhakis, E., and I. Nilsson. 2010. "Byzantine Narrative: The Form of Storytelling in Byzantium." In *James* 2010: 263–74.

Cavallo, G. 2006. *Lire à Byzance.* Paris.

Cheynet, C. 1996. "L'anthroponymie aristocratique à Byzance." In M. Bourin, J.-M. Martin, and F. Menant (eds.), *L'anthroponymie, document de l'histoire sociale des mondes méditerranéens médiévaux*, 267–94. Rome.

Cougny, E. 1890. *Epigrammatum Anthologia Palatina cum Planudeis et appendice nova epigrammatum veterum ex libris et marmoribus ductorum*, III. Paris.

Criscuolo, U., and R. Maisano (eds.). 2000. *Categorie linguistiche e concettuali della storiografia bizantina.* Naples.

Debié, M. (ed.). 2009. *L'historiographie syriaque. Études syriaques.* Paris.

Drpić, I. 2011. *Kosmos of Verse: Art and Epigram in Late Byzantium.* Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.

Duffy, J. and Papaioannou, S. 2003. "Michael Psellos and the Authorship of the Historia Syntomos: Final Considerations." In: A. Abramea, A. Laiou, and E. Chrysos (eds.), *Byzantium, State and Society: In Memory of Nikos Oikonomides*, 219–29. Athens.

Ermerins, F.Z. 1840. *Anecdota medica Graeca.* Leiden.

Euangelatou-Notara, F. 1982. *Σημειώματα ἑλληνικῶν κωδίκων.* Athens.

Follieri, E. 1969. *Codices Graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae selecti temporum locorumque ordine digesti commentariis et transcriptionibus instructi.* Vatican.

Gaul, N. 2010. "The Manuscript Tradition." In E.J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, 69–81. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Gautier, P. 1989. *Michael Psellus, Theologica*, I. Leipzig.

Gay, P. 1995. *The Naked Heart.* New York.

Grecu, V. 1966. *Georgios Sphrantzes. Memorii 1401–1477.* Bucarest.

Grumel, V. 1958. *La chronologie.* Paris.

Grünbart, M. 2011. "Zur Memorialkultur im byzantinischen Mittelalter." In D. Sullivan, E. Fisher, and S. Papaioannou (eds.), *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, 373–94. Leiden.

Hardt, I. 1806. *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Bavaricae*, II. Munich.

Hinterberger, M. 1999. *Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz.* Vienna.

Hunger, H. 1961. *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, I: *Codices historici, codices philosophici et philologici.* Vienna.

Hunger, H. 1969. *Johannes Chortasmenos: Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften. Einleitung, Regesten, Prosopographie, Text*. Vienna.

Hunger, H. 1978. *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*. Munich.

James. L. (ed.). 2010. *A Companion to Byzantium*. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Jouanno, C. 2002. *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre: Domaine grec*. Paris.

Kaldellis, A. 2010. "The Corpus of Byzantine Historiography: An Interpretative Essay." In: P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World*, 211–22. London.

Kambylis, A. 1991. *Eustathios von Thessalonike: Prooimion zum Pindarkommentar. Einleitung, kritischer Text, Indices*. Göttingen.

Kamil, M. 1970. *Catalogue of All Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catharine on Mount Sinai*. Wiesbaden.

Karpozilos, A. 1997–2009. *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι*. 3 vols. Athens.

Kotter, P.B. 1973. *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, II. Berlin.

Kotter, P.B. 1975. *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, III. Berlin.

Kroll, W. (ed.). 1926. *Historia Alexandri Magni, recensio vetusta*. Berlin.

Lampros, S. 1908. "Μονῳδίαι καὶ θρῆνοι ἐπὶ τῇ ἁλώσει τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως," *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5: 190–269.

Langkavel, B. 1868. *Simeonis Sethi Syntagma de alimentorum facultatibus*. Leipzig.

Lauxtermann, M.D. 2003. *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*. Vienna.

Lemerle, P. 1977. *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin*. Paris.

Liakos, A. 2007. *Πώς το παρελθόν γίνεται ιστορία*. Athens.

Ljubarskij, J.N. 1992. "Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46: 177–86.

Lozza, G. (ed.). 2000. *Cosma di Gerusalemme: Commentario ai carmi di Gregorio Nazianzeno. Introduzione, testo critico e note*. Naples.

Macrides, R.J. 1996. "The Historian in the History." In C.N. Constantinides, N. Panagiotakes, E.M. Jeffreys, and A.D. Angelou (eds.), *Philellēn: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, 205–24. Venice.

Macrides, R.J. (ed.). 2010. *Byzantine History as Literature*. Aldershot.

Magdalino, P. 1983. "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*." *Speculum* 58: 326–46.

Magdalino, P. 2002. "Medieval Constantinople: Built Environment and Urban Development." In A.E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, 529–37. Washington, DC.

Magdalino, P., and R. Nelson (eds.). 2010. *The Old Testament in Byzantium*. Washington, DC.

Markopoulos, A. 2009. "From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography. New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10th–11th Centuries." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 10: 697–715.

Martini, A., and D. Bassi. 1906. *Catalogus codicum Graecorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae*. Milan.

Mercati, I., and P.F. de' Cavalieri. 1923. *Codices vaticani graeci,* I: *Codices 1–329*. Rome.

Messis, C. 2004. "Deux versions de la même "vérité": Les deux vies d'hosios Mélétios au XIIe siècle." *In Odorico and Agapitos* 2004: 303–45.

Messis, C. 2006. "La mémoire du «je» souffrant: Construire et écrire la mémoire personelle dans les récits de captivité." *In Odorico et al.* 2006: 107–46.

Migne, J.-P. 1860. *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)*, 88. Paris.

Migne, J.-P. 1864, 1891. *Patrologiae cursus completus (series Graeca)*, 95–96. Paris.

Misch, G. 1949–1962. *Geschichte der Autobiographie*. 2 vols. Frankfurt am Main.

Morse, R. 1991. *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality*. Cambridge.

Mossay J. 1981. *Repertorium Nazianzenum. Orationes. Textus Graecus*, I. Paderborn.

Mosshammer, A.A. 1984. *Georgius Syncellus. Ecloga chronographica*. Leipzig.

Nilsson, I. 2006. "Discovering Literariness in the Past: Literature vs. History in the *Synopsis Chronike* of Konstantinos Manasses." *In Odorico et al.* 2006: 15–31.

Odorico, P. 2012. "Poésies à la marge, réflexions personnelles? Quelques observations sur les poésies du Parisinus graecus." In K. Demoen and F. Bernard (eds.), *Poetry and Its Contexts in Eleventh-century Byzantium*, 207–24. Aldershot.

Odorico, P., and P. Agapitos (eds.). 2004. *Les Vies des saints à Byzance: Genre littéraire ou biographie historique?* Paris.

Odorico, P., P. A. Agapitos, and M. Hinterberger (eds.). 2006. *L'écriture de la mémoire: La littérarité de l'historiographie*. Paris.

Oikonomidès N. 1985. *Byzantine Lead Seals*. Washington, DC.

Omont, H. 1888. *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, II. Paris.

Panagiotakis, N. 1965. *Λέων ὁ Διάκονος*. Athens.

Papaioannou, S. 2010. "The Aesthetics of History: From Theophanes to Eustathios." In Macrides 2010: 3–21.

Papaioannou, S. 2012. "A Fragile Literature: Byzantine Letter-Collections and the Case of Michael Psellos." In P. Odorico (ed.), *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte en tant que message immédiat*, 289–328. Paris.

Papalexandrou, A. 2010. "The Memory Culture of Byzantium." In L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium*, 108–22. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Patlagean, E. 1984. "Les débuts d'une aristocratie byzantine et le témoinage de l'historiographie: Système des noms et liens de parenté aux ixe–xe siècles." In M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, 23–43. Oxford.

Rabe, H. (ed.). 1913. *Hermogenis opera*. Leipzig.

Reinsch, D.R. 2006. "Historia ancilla litterarum? Zum literarischen Geschmack in der Komnenenzeit. Das Beispiel der *Σύνοψις Χρονική* des Konstantinos Manasses." *In Odorico et al.* 2006: 81–94.

Reynolds, D.F. 2001. *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. Berkeley.

Ronconi, F. 2010. "Juxtaposition / assemblage de textes et histoire de la tradition: Le cas du Par. gr. 1711." In A. Bravo García and I. Pérez Martín (eds., with the assistance of J. Signes Codoñer), *The Legacy of Bernard de Montfaucon: Three Hundred Years of Studies on Greek Handwriting*, 503–20, 899–905. Turnhout.

Sajdak, J. 1914. *Historia critica scholiastarum et commentatorum Gregorii Nazianzeni*, Pars 1. Krakow.

Schreiner, P. 1975. *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, I. Vienna.

Scott, R. 2010. "Text and Context in Byzantine Historiography." *In James* 2010: 251–62.

Snipes, K. 1989. "The *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos and the Textual Tradition and Transmission of the Byzantine Historians of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries." *Zbornik radova Vizantoloschkog Instituta* 27/28: 43–62.

Snipes, K. 1991. "Notes on Parisinus Graecus 1712." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41: 141–61.

Spatharakis, I. 1976. *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Leiden.

Treadgold, W. 2007. *The Early Byzantine Historians*. Basingstoke and New York.

Trumpf, J. (ed.). 1974. *Anonymi Byzantini vita Alexandri regis Macedonum*. Stuttgart.

Volk, R. 1990. *Der medizinische Inhalt der Schriften des Michael Psellos*. Munich.

von Moos, P. 1976. "Poeta und Historicus im Mittelalter." *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 98: 93–130.

Westerink, L.G. 1992. *Michael Psellus, Poemata*. Stuttgart.

Wilson, N.G. 1978. "A Byzantine Miscellany: MS. Barocci 131 Described." *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 27: 157–79.

The Past in the Early and Medieval Islamic Middle East (circa 750–circa 1250)

ANDREW MARSHAM

Introduction

The swift expansion of the first Arab-Muslim empire in the seventh and early eighth centuries CE established Islam as the ideology of the ruling political elites across an astonishingly large area of West Eurasia.[1] By the mid-eighth century, the caliphate comprised a wide band of territories, roughly between the Tropic of Cancer (23° North) in the south and the 40th parallel in the north. West to East, this broad ribbon of Muslim dominions stretched about 5,000 miles – from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. The same imperial conquests had also begun to establish Arabic as a *lingua franca*, uniting educated elites from Spain and North Africa to Afghanistan and Transoxiana. This very earliest period of Islam, from its origins in the early 600s down to circa 950, is sometimes referred to as the "preclassical" or "formative" era. Its end coincides with the emergence of recognizable "Sunni" and "Shi'i" Islam. The tenth century was also marked by political change: it was the period when the single caliphate that the Muslim conquests had established finally broke apart.[2]

The fragmentation of the imperial Abbasid caliphate left behind a patchwork of kingdoms and emirates, as well as two major rival caliphates, in Spain (929–1031) and in Egypt (969–1171). The Abbasids did retain some power in Iraq down to 1258, but in a state of competition and fragile coexistence with various powerful military groups and rival political entities. The most important of these were the Seljuk Turks (1040–1194). Their migration into Iran and Iraq led to the elaboration

of the theory of the division of political and religious authority in Sunni Islam between the Turkish sultan and the Arab caliph. In the same period, large non-Arab tribal political entities also predominated in the far West. First the Almoravid (circa 1040–1147) and then the Almohad (circa 1130–1269) "Berber" empires ruled northwest Africa and southern Spain. While Latin Christian expansion caused a retreat of Muslim political power in Spain and the northwest Mediterranean, on all other frontiers both trade and conquest had begun to expand the Islamic world: into sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent.

Although the term has western or European connotations, this period after circa 950 can be usefully characterized as "medieval" – in that it follows the "formative era" and precedes the "early modern" period.[3] However, at the mid-point of the "medieval" period, there is a significant break in the political history of the Islamic Middle East with the Mongol invasion of Iran and Iraq in the 1250s. This coincided with other processes of change in society and the economy. By the mid-fourteenth century, when the Mongol Ilkhanate (r. 1258–1335) in Iran had fragmented, the Eastern Islamic world had been opened to Central Asia and China to an unprecedented extent, and had been further transformed by the demise of the Sunni caliphate of Baghdad and the "nomadization" of the plains and highlands of Anatolia and Iran. Meanwhile, in Egypt and Syria, the Mamluk Turks (r. 1260–1517) had secured power not least through their successful resistance to the Mongols. To the north, the seeds of what would become the Ottoman Empire were germinating in the soil of the complex tribal conflicts of Anatolia.

This chapter takes the Mongol invasions of the 1250s as its end point and focuses for the most part on the "central Islamic lands" of the "Middle East" (roughly from Egypt in the west to Uzbekistan in the east). As one might expect of such a geographically varied region over this period of over five centuries, thinking about the past varied a great deal. Nonetheless, commonalities and continuities in social, economic, and political structures do lend the region and the period a certain unity. Large monarchic political entities were common; at times, these fragmented into smaller principalities. Most of these monarchies and principalities depended upon a balance of coercive power derived from slave armies (*mamluk*s, *ghulam*s) and from nomadic, or recently nomadic, tribal groups. Their organizational power derived from bureaucracies of *kuttab* and *wuzara* ("scribes" and "viziers," or "ministers"). These were often drawn from free elite families specialising in bureaucratic skills, or from the *mamluk*s and *ghulam*s. For much of their ideological power, however, rulers depended upon association with local religious elites. These elites can be characterized as either the "charismatic" holy men of the sufi orders, or the various scripturalist and traditionist classes known collectively as the *'ulama* (religious scholars).[4]

It is the written material composed by these elite groups – above all by the scribes and the *'ulama* – which comprises almost all of our evidence for historical consciousness in medieval Islam. This has two important consequences. First, "popular" and "folk" conceptions of history and the past are very hard – indeed, largely impossible – to see. Even where we can glimpse nonelite ideas, they are

mediated by the literate elites who composed these texts.[5] Second, literate discourse was dominated by religion. The "men of the pen," whether court scribes or religious scholars, had all received religious training. Much as the Bible shaped historiography in medieval Christendom, the historical framework provided by the scriptures of Islam influenced all historical writing in the medieval Islamic world. Indeed, because the "religious sciences" were the most prevalent forms of literate discourse, ideas about the past in these texts – not recognisably historiography at all in the modern sense of the word – deserve our attention as the main way in which the literate elite thought about past time.

Of those texts that *are* recognisably historiographical, the great majority were produced by the same religious scholars. Some wrote independently, but many wrote with the patronage of military and political elites, thereby helping to contribute to the righteous image of the ruler. Almost all probably wrote predominantly for an audience of fellow *ʿulama*. However, there were other motives for writing history and other kinds of historians: bureaucrats both wrote and read histories not only for the purpose of propaganda but also for the education of themselves and others in the political arts; tribal traditions about genealogy and kinship were another form of historical thought. There were also rare historiographers for whom neither traditionist religion nor politics appear to have been the primary motivation. Some of the *adab* ("urbane literary") tradition celebrated literary skill for its own merit, and this was occasionally combined with an approach to knowledge that can be described as humanist, where a spirit of scientific inquiry predominates over narrowly religious or political concerns.

In examining the evolution of these historiographic traditions, the "formative" and "medieval" periods of Islam are best treated separately: in the formative period (down to circa 950), many of the generic outlines of the Islamic historical tradition took shape; from the later tenth century onwards, these genres were maintained, developed, and adapted with the changing social and political circumstances of the medieval Middle East.[6] These two periods of Islamic historiography are the subject of the fourth and fifth sections of this chapter. However, given the central importance of scripture to intellectual life, it makes sense first to address the relationship between monotheism and historical time, before turning to the ways the past was remembered in the interpretation of scripture, and in ritual and ceremonial. Then we can turn to the diverse genres of medieval Islamic writing that are more recognisably historiographical.

Islamic Monotheism, Time, and History

Many of the foundations of Islamic civilization took shape in the matrix of the sixth- and seventh-century Middle East, and so Islam shared extensively in the heritage of Middle Eastern Judaism and Christianity.[7] This extends to ideas about time and the past. Like Jews and Christians, medieval Muslims saw time as linear, stretching from Creation to the Last Day. God had intervened, and would

intervene, in His Creation between these two points. For Muslims, the most important moment besides the Beginning and the End was God's revelation to the final prophet, Muhammad (d. 632) and Muhammad's founding of a Muslim community (*umma*). The series of revelations to Muhammad which became the Qur'an were understood to be the last and most perfect of a series of God's communications with humanity via prophetic messengers. About twelve years into his mission, in 622, Muhammad founded the Muslim community (*umma*) at Medina in West Arabia. This quickly became the event from which others were dated. Indeed, within a generation of Muhammad's death, a lunar calendar counted from his emigration (*hijra*) had become the main system for dating in administrative texts and it was quickly adopted almost universally.

For medieval Christians, "the end was in sight almost as clearly as the beginning" (Southern 2004: 31); this was the case too for most medieval Muslims. The *eschaton* (end of time) was generally felt to be more proximate to the present than Creation, and – as in Christendom – recurrent predictions of the imminent apocalypse were triggered by those political upheavals and natural disasters that could be understood in such terms: the "Abbasid Revolution" of 750, in which the Abbasid dynasty seized control of the Muslim empire, is an early example of a movement with a strong apocalyptic dimension (Robinson 2010); the various crises of the tenth century triggered another wave of apocalyptic thought, which included the movement that established the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt (Halm 1996: 20–21); the Crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century all also provoked similar speculations (Khalidi 1994: 182–88). It has also been suggested that Muhammad's prophetic mission may itself have included an apocalyptic dimension.[8]

No doubt in part because of their revolutionary potential, such predictions about the future were often viewed as unorthodox and dangerous. In contrast, sober and accurate assessments of time were attempted on the basis of scriptural and other evidence. For example, the Baghdadi lawyer, Qur'anic exegete, and universal historian Abu Ja'far al-Tabari (d. 923) listed a number of measures which – in line with medieval Christian views – made the total duration of the world either 6,000 or 7,000 years, of which the bulk was past; al-Tabari relied on Prophetic tradition in support of the 7,000 year theory (Whitby 2008: 17–18). Just over a century later, the great Central Asian scientist and polymath Abu'l-Rayhan al-Biruni (d. after 1050) made a very thorough compilation of material about the age of the world that included the Persian assessment of the world's duration at 12,000 years (al-Biruni 1879: 17), of which just over half had elapsed. Thus for most Muslims who thought about such things, Creation was fewer than 250 generations in the past, and the end was closer still.

It should be noted that there were medieval Muslims who expressed very different understandings of time. For the Isma'ili Shi'is, time was cyclical. But nonetheless the Isma'ilis' cycles usually moved within an ultimately linear development from Creation to the Last Day, and time was also measured in thousands of years (Walker 1978). Really divergent ideas about time came not from monotheist religion, but

from Greek philosophy and Indian astronomy. In Iraq the chronographer
Hamza al-Isfahani (d. 970) noted that there were other ways of reckoning time that
made the universe not a few thousand, but rather billions of years old:

> The astronomers … [claim] that the age of the earth from the very first day that the
> planets were set in motion … until the day that the caliph al-Mutawakkil set out for
> Damascus [Spring 858] amount to 4,000,000,000 multiplied by three, and
> 300,000,000 and 20,000,000 solar years. (Khalidi 1994: 121)

It was known that Greek philosophers had argued for the eternity of the world, but
this idea was widely rejected as incompatible with revelation. However, other Greek
ideas did contribute to natural science and so suggested other ways of thinking
about time. In Spain, the philosopher and theologian Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 1198)
used Aristotle to explain how ancient cataclysmic changes in geomorphology were
not recorded in human history:

> Some parts of the earth became sea after they had been land and land after they had
> been sea … This is also determined by direct observation of shells and other objects
> to be found in depressions and glens which are found only in seas … The reason why
> these incidents are not recorded so that they reach us is, as Aristotle says, the span of
> time and epochs and because this appears only in thousands of years so that languages
> and scripts change and writing perishes … It may also be that all who witnessed or
> were informed of such events have perished. (Khalidi 1994: 160)

However, such observations were confined to small intellectual elites, and these
elites noted these ideas cautiously and with great respect for the religious traditions
that reckoned the age of the world at only a few thousand years.

Indeed, monotheism tends to exert a certain flattening effect upon time,
with past events often being viewed as precursors of those in the present and
even the future (Al-Azmeh 2007: 28–32). Nowhere is this more evident than
in the Qur'an itself. Although the Qur'an is certainly not a conventional work
of history, and is not arranged as such, it is a text in which the past is under-
stood as one of the most important evidential sources for knowing God's will
and for deriving moral lessons for the present. History in the Qur'an is a series
of repetitive divine interventions through prophetic messengers. When these
messages were ignored or resisted, divine punishment was visited upon their
recipients. Muhammad (who very rarely appears by name in the text) is situated
in a long line of Prophets stretching back to Adam, with Moses and Jesus
as especially prominent figures. Events from the Hebrew Bible, the New
Testament, and wider Judeo-Christian tradition appear frequently, and usually
in a form that appears to assume some prior knowledge of the material. There
are also references to the Arabian past – notably the mid-sixth-century cam-
paigns of the South Arabian king Abraha, as well as the uniquely Qur'anic
prophets, Hud and Salih.

The Past in the Religious Sciences

The transmission and interpretation of this Qur'anic material, and of other scriptures, was arguably the most prevalent form of "historical" thought in medieval Islam; indeed, it was understood to be the foundation of all religious belief and practice. For Sunni Muslims, the most important scripture besides the Qur'an itself came to be the six "canonical" collections of *hadith*. The *hadith* comprised the thousands of sayings and actions of Muhammad and his closest Companions. For the "Twelver" Shi'is, the *hadith* derived from Muhammad and the 12 of his descendents (down to circa 940) who had held the position of Imam, or spiritual leader of the Muslims. The Isma'ili Shi'a also came to depend upon *hadith* collected from descendents of Muhammad, as well as upon the teachings of those they recognized as Imams (Daftary 2007: 169–71).

Both the Qur'an and the *hadith* had developed over time, albeit at very different rates. The Qur'an appears to have achieved something closely resembling its canonical form (but not its canonical place in religious theory and practice) very quickly indeed – probably well before 700. In contrast, the *hadith* took far longer to take shape, and longer still to assume their preeminent status in Islam. Although the roots of the *hadith* were long, it was only during the ninth and tenth centuries that certain groups of *hadith* began to be widely accepted as the *sine qua non* of Sunni scholarship. Twelver and Isma'ili Shi'i *hadith* science took shape in the tenth and eleventh centuries, with the formulation of doctrine in Buyid Iraq (945–1055) and Fatimid Egypt (969–1171), respectively.

The development of the *hadith* as scripture alongside the Qur'an was inextricably related to the formation of scholarly elites and their institutional structures. The formation of the corpus of canonical *hadith* was a function of eighth-, ninth, and tenth-century conflict between approaches to religion and law, with one group emphasizing "tradition" (*ahl al-sunna*) and other approaches based more on "independent reasoning" (*ahl al-ra'y*). With the victory of tradition over independent reasoning, one of the key tenets of classical Sunni Islam was established. Then, during and after the ninth century, the proto-Sunni *'ulama* (religious scholars) built their social position upon their privileged right to interpret the *hadith* – and hence all of Islam – as the "heirs of the Prophet." As a result, the *'ulama*'s role in protecting tradition against the corruption of "innovation" (*bid'a*), became a recurrent theme of scholarly discourse (Berkey 1995). Religious authority depended upon properly transmitted knowledge of the past.

Since the transmission of the memory of the Prophetic example was what underpinned the *'ulama*'s claims to authority, the institutions of *hadith* scholarship were critical to them. The "chain of transmission" (*isnad*) was the instrument that guaranteed the *hadith* – an unbroken chain of transmission from teacher to pupil that stretched back to the original eyewitness of the deeds or words of Muhammad or one of his Companions. Each "report" (or *hadith*)

was recorded with such a list of transmitters, as in this example of an account from the Prophet's wife 'A'isha (d. 678), taken from the collection of *hadith* made by al-Bukhari (d. 870):

> Yahya b. Sulayman reported to us, saying, Ibn Wahb reported to me that 'Amr reported to us that Abu al-Nadr reported to him from Sulayman b. Yasar from 'A'isha – may God be pleased with her. She said: "I never saw the Prophet laughing vigorously, to the extent that I saw his palate; he only used to smile." (al-Bukhari 1862–1908: III. 134).

Precisely when the idea of the *hadith* and the associated system of the *isnad* first developed is not certain. Nor is the question of precisely how oral and written transmission of this material functioned in the very early period – although the form clearly preserves an emphasis on the prestige of orality. However, it seems likely that by the early eighth century, at the latest, some religious scholars had become specialists in memorizing, transmitting, and interpreting such material and that its importance grew rapidly in the eighth and ninth centuries, with written note-taking complementing transmission from teacher to student orally and aurally (Schoeler 2006).

Even after the tenth century, when certain written *hadith* compilations made in the ninth and tenth centuries had assumed widely respected "canonical" status among Sunni Muslims, the chain of personal transmission still remained essential to intellectual life. "Audition" (*sama'*) and "recitation" (*qira'a*) of the *hadith* retained a privileged status over "written copying" (*wijada* or *kitaba*). The "licence" (*ijaza*) – a document certifying the authority of someone to transmit a text – was one of the institutional results of this emphasis on personal oral and aural transmission of authority via a "circle" (*halqa* or *majlis*) of scholars around an authoritative teacher (Schoeler 2006: 29–30). Within the Sunni scholarly community four main "schools" (*madhhab*s) had come to be recognized as orthodox, each built upon traditions about the methods and interpretations of an eponymous founder.

Thus, religious authority was profoundly historical in that it depended upon the transmission of the memory of the Prophetic example and upon the claim to a privileged right to interpret it. By the eleventh century, the Qur'an and *hadith* were universally acknowledged as two of the four foundations of the Sunni *shari'a* ("way"). This *shari'a* was discovered through these texts and through two other sources: "consensus" (*ijma*) and "analogical reasoning" (*qiyas*). Hence, the *shari'a* was not a fixed entity in itself, but an aspiration or ideal, constantly rediscovered through the application of the four sources of legal reasoning (*usul al-fiqh*). The *exempla* from the foundational, Prophetic, era were understood to be sufficient for all times and places if correctly interpreted by the scholarly community, and systematic efforts were made to show that this was indeed the case. As Al-Azmeh has put it, Islamic law, as conceived by the medieval *'ulama*, was a "consequence of [their] salvation-historical outlook" (Al-Azmeh 2007: 67).

Public Ceremonial and Ritual

Because of their central role in social life, the outlook of the *'ulama* permeated public discourse in medieval Islam. For most Muslims, recollection of the past did not take a written form, or even a primarily verbal one, but rather was inscribed in the rituals and customs that structured public life.[9] As with all ritual, these always implied the continuation of past precedent and sometimes the very conscious recollection of past events. The most important was the congregational Friday prayer (*juma'*) that reasserted the identity of local communities through a ritual prescribed by the Qur'an and Prophetic *hadith*. Major annual religious rituals included the annual fast in Ramadan, the Eid (or festival) with which it ended (*'id al-fitr*), and the "Eid of Sacrifice" (*'id al-adha*) which recalled Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son to God; all claimed continuity from the formative period of Islam and the example of the Prophet.

For the Shi'a there was also the day of Ashura, on which Muhammad's grandson, the Imam Husayn had been martyred, and the day of Ghadir Khumm, when Muhammad had nominated his cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali b. Abi Talib as his successor. These rituals flourished in Buyid Iraq (945–1055) – when "Twelver" or "Imami" Shi'ism was fully articulated; this provoked a response from Sunnis, who initiated a rival "feast of the Cave" to commemorate their interpretation of the succession to the Prophet, whom they understood to have passed authority to his father-in-law, Abu Bakr, as opposed to 'Ali. Public processions associated with these events became moments of communal tension and sometimes violence (Kennedy 2004: 226–29). In early medieval Cairo (969–1171), ruled by the Isma'ili Fatimids, there were other distinctive public rituals many of which were shaped by the need to integrate a heterogeneous population of Muslims as well as Christian and Jewish sects (Sanders 1994). Fatimid ritual also included the celebration of the Prophet's birthday; Sunni Muslims only began to celebrate this occasion early in the thirteenth century, under Ayyubid rule (*EI*[2], "Mawlid 1" [H. Fuchs (F. de Jong)]).

All public ritual connected the ruler to his community: he was named in Friday prayers and he often appeared in public rituals such as the two Eids. In so doing he claimed a place in the legitimate line of political authorities in Islam and an association with the memory of the Prophet. Other annual or occasional rituals served a similar function. Control of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) was crucially important in claims to caliphal legitimacy in the formative period and, even after the fragmentation of political authority in the ninth century, it remained a very important marker of authority for the monarch who presided over it. In contrast, many of the trappings of royal power, including the accessional ceremony (*bay'a*), asserted continuity with monarchical power more generally – Persian elements appeared in caliphal ceremonial almost immediately (Marsham 2009: 142), and the coming of the Seljuks introduced symbols that recalled the nomadic Turkish past. Nonetheless, the *'ulama* usually had a central role in organizing the accession and much of its symbolism was religious: at its heart was a pledge (*bay'a*) that

recalled Qur'anic and Prophetic precedent in its central gesture of the handclasp (*bay'a*, *safqa*); its invocation of God's Covenant with Mankind linked the current ruler to a line stretching back to Adam (Marsham 2009: 178, 313–14).

Given the centrality of such historical consciousness to religious and political life in Islam, it is unsurprising to find much medieval Islamic material that can genuinely be described as historiography. The audiences for such texts were necessarily far smaller than for most ritual, and also smaller than for more strictly religious and legal texts; nonetheless, historical writing was important to various elite discourses almost from the beginning of Islam.

Islamic Historical Writing to circa 950

The definition of "historical writing" in the formative and medieval periods of Islam is not straightforward. As in many other premodern societies, "historians" were usually something else too; their identity was not usually closely tied to the activity of writing about the past, still less were they "professional" historians (Robinson 2003: 6). Almost all had trained as lawyers (*fuqaha*) or religious scholars (*'ulama*). Many were associated with royal or princely courts, as courtiers, scribes, ministers, and sometimes soldiers,[10] while others remained independent of "secular" and "state" power but sustained themselves through activities other than writing history, such as teaching, commerce, or the management of private wealth.

Furthermore, there is no term in classical Arabic that encompasses all the genres of historical writing that we would recognize as "historiography." The closest term is *ta'rikh* (Persian *tarikh*). Although sometimes translated as "history" or "historiography," *ta'rikh* is perhaps best rendered a little more narrowly as "chronography"; it derives from a Semitic root relating to the moon, and hence to calendars (*EI*[2], "Ta'rikh I.1" [F.C. de Blois]) and it usually refers to chronicles, chronologically arranged universal histories, and the like. *Ta'rikh* does not tend to describe the two other types of Muslim historiography recently identified as broad generic categories by Chase Robinson: "biography" and "prosopography" – the former privileging characters or merits of individuals, the latter group membership (Robinson 2003: 61–67). Prosopography was particularly important in the medieval Islamic world. Collections of biographies of people from a specific group abound, coming under various labels: *tabaqat* ("classes," "generations"), *'ilm al-rijal* ("science of men"). So too do genealogical works (*nasab*) of various kinds. The biography of single individuals – notably the Prophet, but also other figures – was usually called *sira* and was also an important form of historical writing, alongside collections of such biographies (*tarajim*, sing. *tarjama*).

These basic genres of Islamic historical writing are all extant from the mid- to late ninth century.[11] References to earlier generations of transmitters of historical reports, both orally and in writing, show that the first extant historical writing was in fact the culmination of developments that can now only be partially reconstructed.[12] Pre-Islamic Arabia and the very early Islamic polity were societies without a tradition of

historiography – rather, traditions about the past were transmitted orally and were highly plastic, as is typical of tribal and nomadic cultures. However, with the formation of the Muslim empire both the means and motivation to record history in writing emerged, and by the early to mid-eighth century written texts about the past were being composed. Many of the extant ninth-century books appear to be syntheses which replaced earlier, more fragmentary compilations. They appear to have survived where their predecessors did not simply because they were of greater utility and so were copied more frequently (Robinson 2003: 8–24, 30–36).

Indeed, the late eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries were a period of prolific scientific and literary production in all spheres of intellectual endeavour, within which historical thought and writing were in some ways a minor theme. The causes of this scientific and intellectual "Golden Age" are not yet fully understood, but it is clear that the economic success of the Abbasid empire (Gutas 1998) and competition among religious and bureaucratic elites within it (Saliba 2007) were important factors, as was the availability of cheap cloth-based paper following the introduction of Chinese paper-making techniques in the middle of the eighth century (Pedersen 1984; Bloom 2001). By the ninth century, urban society in the Middle East was highly literate and copied books in large numbers (Pedersen 1984; Toorawa 2005).

When it comes to the impulses that drove the production of history (as opposed to scholarly endeavour in general), three further factors were particularly important. The first was a sociopolitical context in which the established historiographic traditions of the Middle East were available to the Arab-Muslim conquerors: Syriac, Greek, and Persian historiographic traditions all influenced the emergent Arabic tradition, and were in turn influenced by it. This cross-cultural transmission parallels similar developments in philosophy, science, medicine, and mathematics. However, although existing historiographical traditions were part of the matrix in which Islamic historiography developed, its formation cannot be explained with reference to this context alone. There are also two crucially important "internal" religio-political dynamics: the emergent "proto-Sunni" and "proto-Shi'i" conceptions of authority (and conflicts between and within them); and the role of the Abbasid state in sponsoring historical writing for purposes of propaganda and legitimation. The past mattered as a source of authority in Islam and therefore it was the claims of the *ulama* and the caliphs that shaped representations of it. The discussion following here will focus on the factors specific to historiography – existing traditions and religious and political competition for authority.

The various languages in which historical texts were composed has probably tended to mask the extent of the cultural exchange that took place in the first centuries of Islam. In the seventh and early eighth centuries, a tiny Arab-Muslim elite had seized control of all of the vast empire of Sasanian Iran and most of the territories of Byzantium. Conversion to Islam, especially in Iraq and Iran after circa 750, brought large numbers of non-Arabs into the ruling elite, but Muslims remained a minority outside some of the cities. As a result, early Islamic society was "cosmopolitan and eclectic," with cultural "borrowings" and exchanges occurring in numerous directions (Robinson 2003: 50). Some of the very earliest extant historical texts from the

"Islamic" world are seventh- and early eighth-century lists of caliphs composed in Syriac by Christians living under Arab-Muslim rule. The work of Theophilus of Edessa (d. circa 785) shows that by the middle of the eighth century material composed in Arabic at the Abbasid court was being transmitted *back* into new Greek and Syriac historical texts. Theophilus, who was an astrologer and historian at the court of the caliph al-Mahdi (r. 775–785), appears to have relied upon both Greek and Muslim Arabic material in composing his history. This work is lost, but it can be partially reconstructed from the later work of the Christian Arab Agapius, the Byzantine scholar Theophanes, and the Syriac *Chronicle of 1234* (Hoyland 2011).

The other significant traditions besides those in Greek and Syriac were those of Sasanian Iran. The translation into Arabic of Sasanian "advice literature" – such as the *Covenant of Ardashir*, the *Letter of Tansar*, and the *Book of the Crown* – by Abbasid bureaucrats and ministers in the eighth and ninth centuries indicates the debt of Abbasid political and bureaucratic culture to Sasanian practice and the energy that was devoted to preserving (and perhaps also reinventing) aspects of it. Meanwhile, the specifically historiographical traditions of post-Sasanian Iran seem to have contributed a model for history as the record of the deeds of kings (Robinson 2003: 48). None of the Middle Persian (that is, pre-Islamic Persian, or Pahlavi) historical tradition survives. However, it is clear that the lost pre-Islamic *Khwadaynamag* (or "Book of Lords") permeated the various late antique Middle Eastern historical traditions (Howard-Johnston 2010: 82), including that of ninth-century Islam: it can be recognized in the extensive treatment of pre-Islamic Iran in al-Tabari's (d. 923) universal history and in the full discussion of the same period in the works of al-Dinawari (d. 891) and al-Ya'qubi (d. circa 905) both of which place particular emphasis upon royal authority as the organizing principle of their *Histories* (Howard-Johnston 2008: 342). Later the *Khwadaynamag* would reemerge in the magnificent New Persian *Shahnama* tradition of the Persianate Eastern Islamic lands (Meisami 1999: 37–46).

Despite these continuities in Middle Eastern historiography, Islamic annals and chronicles diverged from existing models in important ways. One of the most immediately obvious differences is that, in contrast to their precursors, many Islamic chronicles deploy the same *isnad*, or "chain of transmission," found in the religious *hadith* texts. In histories, these *isnad*s introduce short anecdotal reports (*akhbar*, sing. *khabar* – analogous to the *hadith*s in the religious texts). This structure allows the reader to trace some of the purported sources of the material and to observe conflicting reports of the same episode (although the *isnad* tends to be used less rigorously in historical writing than in *hadith*). The *isnad* structure is paralleled to some extent in Judaic religious tradition, and it is at least possible that late antique Judaism contributed to the formation of the early Islamic religious tradition (and/or that Islam influenced Jewish practice).[13] Whatever its origins, it remains the case that the *khabar* and *isnad* structure was adopted by many of the earliest Muslim chroniclers; it continued to be a prominent feature of much historical narrative down to the twelfth century, reflecting the close connection between religious and legal scholarship and historical thought in medieval Islam.

The same connection between religion and historiography is also reflected in the concerns of the historians. The ninth century was the period in which clear proto-Sunni and proto-Shi'i positions on the leadership of the Muslim polity began to take shape. Each group defined itself through a very different perspective on the early decades of Islamic history. For proto-Sunnis, history was in many ways the triumphant story of God's victorious community and His caliphs. Leadership of the Muslims had rightly been transmitted to Companions (*sahaba*) of Muhammad, all of whom, like Muhammad himself, had been members of the large Meccan tribal group Quraysh. The first four caliphs in particular were ascribed the status of *Rashidun* ("Rightly-Guiding Ones"). Their successors were not of the same standing, not least because most of them were not Companions of Muhammad. Nonetheless, for proto-Sunnis, the later caliphs had continued to secure the political unity (*jama'a*) that was crucial to continued success. Meanwhile, the religious authority of Muhammad and the Companions had passed to the *'ulama*.

For the proto-Shi'is, history was more tragic: the legitimate successors to Muhammad had been his close family, and particularly the descendents of his daughter Fatima and cousin and son-in-law, 'Ali b. Abi Talib. Thus of the first four caliphs, only the fourth, 'Ali b. Abi Talib (r. 656–661), was in fact a legitimate leader. Worse, all of the legitimate successors to 'Ali had been killed by the ruling caliphs. "Twelver" Shi'is, who came to form the largest Shi'i group, held that the twelfth and last Imam had disappeared from human view in 874, accessible only to certain Shi'i scholars; then in 941 he became completely hidden, only to return at the end of time (Crone 2004: 110–19, 125–41).

These competing visions of history are to some extent reflected in almost all the historiography of the formative period. A good case-study from "chronography" is al-Tabari's huge *History of Prophets and Kings*. Although the *History* is a vast compilation of material derived from earlier scholars, it is also a work of deliberate authorial composition that betrays a marked proto-Sunni tendency. The *History* traces the Covenant between God and Humanity as represented by the sequence of "prophets and kings," beginning with Adam and ending close to al-Tabari's own time, in the early tenth century. The pivot around which the whole narrative is constructed is the life of Muhammad that marks the most perfect realization of the Covenant; subsequent leadership is represented as falling away from this high point, and the irony of the betrayal of the contracts that bind caliphs and their following is a recurrent feature of the narrative (Humphreys 1989). The great political crises of al-Tabari's own lifetime may have contributed to this somewhat pessimistic outlook (Robinson 2012). However, such a sense of decline is also quite typical of premodern monotheist historiography in general.

While it is subtly critical of the caliphs, the whole structure of al-Tabari's *History* affirms monarchical rule as the natural order of things, and emphasizes the merits of "unity" over secession and conflict. Furthermore, for the Abbasid period al-Tabari relies heavily upon sources deriving from the Abbasid court, many of which amount to an official historiography. For example, the succession crises of the early ninth century, in which al-Ma'mun (r. 813–833) succeeded his brother al-Amin (r. 809–13)

after a brutal and prolonged civil war, show strong signs of "Ma'munid" bias (El-Hibri 1999). Al-Tabari is often ironic about the failings of the community to live up to the ideals of its formative era, but he does not question the basic legitimacy of the succession of caliphal power. Indeed, the four *Rashidun* caliphs provide an important backdrop to his assessment of Abbasid rule (El-Hibri 2010).

Al-Tabari's opposition to a proto-Shi'i interpretation of history is shown by his omissions. Texts and events that are crucial for proto-Shi'i political claims (which would undermine the idea of the four "Rightly-Guiding" caliphs) are suppressed; a good example is Muhammad's nomination, at Ghadir Khumm in March 632, of 'Ali as his rightful successor. In contrast, other "universal" historical works from the same period take a much more "Shi'i" position. Both al-Ya'qubi (d. circa 905) and al-Mas'udi (d. 956), who are usually held to have had proto-Shi'i sympathies, do discuss Muhammad's nomination of 'Ali b. Abi Talib; furthermore, they provide extensive biographies of each of the Shi'i Imams and how they were killed by the reigning caliphs – a theme that would reach its high point in the *Martyrdoms of the Talibids* by the tenth-century Shi'i scholar al-Isfahani (d. 967). It is also striking that in their compositions neither of them makes use of the Sunni *'ulama*'s instrument of the *isnad*.

If chronography was in part a means for religious scholars to debate early Islamic history and its religio-political significance, then the genres of "biography" and "prosopography" are perhaps even more closely related to the rise of the *'ulama* and their religio-political claims. As noted above, the first extant extended biography (*sira*) is that of the Prophet Muhammad. However, it seems that the rise of the idea of *the sira* of Muhammad in the eighth and ninth centuries may actually have eclipsed the extent to which a "life" of any exemplary figure was the original sense of the term: numerous references in later sources mention now-lost seventh- and eighth-century *sira*s of caliphs and other prominent early Muslims. As the idea that the basis of Islamic law lay in the actions of Muhammad as preserved by the *'ulama* in the *hadith* gained ground in the ninth and tenth centuries, so the definition of *sira* narrowed to refer primarily to Prophetic biography (Robinson 2003: 64).

Muhammad's life was of obvious interest – not only because his actions had become an important source of legal authority but also because succession to his rule was the ultimate source of political authority for the Abbasid caliphs. The extant versions of his biography transmitted by al-Waqidi (d. 823), Ibn Hisham (d. 833) and al-Tabari (d. 923) derive in whole or in part from the work of Ibn Ishaq (d. 767), a religious scholar close to the early Abbasid court. Although Ibn Ishaq in turn relied upon material from the Umayyad-era scholar al-Zuhri (d. 742), among others, it is only the Abbasid-sponsored (that is, post-750) account of Muhammad's life that survives.

Among the first prosopographical works to survive are those by Ibn Sa'd (d. 845), Ibn Khayyat (d. 854) and al-Zubayri (d. 855). The first two are both named *Kitab al-Tabaqat* (literally "The Book of Generations"). In contrast to the *sira*'s focus on the exemplary life of Muhammad, these early *tabaqat* works reflect a concern with the limits of membership of the Muslim religious community and the

question of the authoritative transmission of the Prophetic example via his "Companions" (*sahaba*) and "Successors" (*tabi'un*). Both texts consist of extensive lists of Muslims, arranged according to their "generation" (*tabaqa*), down to the author's own day. Ibn Khayyat's text includes around 3375 names, Ibn Sa'd's about 4250. Ibn Khayyat's prose is terse – essentially a list of names and tribal genealogies; Ibn Sa'd's provides much fuller information about his subjects, especially for the earlier generations of Companions and Successors. Both men might be described as proto-Sunni in their rejection of the proto-Shi'i idea that true leadership of the community belonged only to the closest relatives of Muhammad, or even only to his descendents. This outlook is reflected in both the scope and the form of their prosopographies.

As its title indicates, al-Zubayri's *Kitab Nasab Quraysh* ("The Book of Qurashi Genealogy") is concerned not with generations of scholars but with kinship networks. It is an extensive genealogy of the tribal group Quraysh, listing thousands of members of the tribe and their relations by kinship and marriage. As one might expect, given the ideological context, al-Zubayri's work focuses on the generations immediately preceding and succeeding the Prophet. Again, al-Zubayri's compilation of vast prosopographical lists appears to be an historiographical expression of the proto-Sunni doctrinal position which accepted all Quraysh as potential leaders of Islam.[14] Like Ibn Khayyat and Ibn Sa'd, al-Zubayri was close to the Abbasid court.

Besides religion and political legitimation, there were other impulses for the production of written history. The genealogical work of Ibn al-Kalbi (d. 819 or 821) is not a very religious text. It shows little interest in Quraysh and far more in the other tribal groups of Arabia, from whom the conquerors of the Muslim empire were drawn. One context that may help to make sense of this is that of the *shu'ubiyya* – the cultural and social tension between Arabs and Iranians that was a feature of an Abbasid society in which non-Arabs had achieved powerful positions in large numbers. Ibn al-Kalbi wrote on numerous subjects, many of them distinctly Arab, including the pagan idols of pre-Islamic Arabia. Another context for Ibn al-Kalbi's work is the same transition from an oral to a literate culture that had generated Islamic historiography. Writing down tribal genealogies transformed them from a plastic medium for politics among nomads into a marker of identity in what was now a cosmopolitan settled civilization.

As the "formative" era drew to a close and both political and religious authority fragmented, the intellectual climate grew more open and diverse, with space for the "humanist" impulse to pursue knowledge for its own sake. Perhaps the best example of this is the universal history by al-Mas'udi (d. 956). Al-Mas'udi was a wealthy polymath from Iraq who traveled extensively in the Middle East and Asia. He was hostile to the narrow "traditionism" of the majority of the proto-Sunni *'ulama* and he seems to have come close to seeing historical study for its own sake as a respectable activity (Robinson 2003: 36). His work is encyclopedic in scope, breaking out of the narrow concerns of "salvation history" to include details about remote and liminal regions of the world such as Francia and India, and deploying numerous entertaining anecdotes as a means to display literary skill.

Islamic Historical Writing circa 950–circa 1250

Al-Mas'udi's history is one reflection of the more complex and diverse Muslim world that emerged from the collapse of the Abbasid empire. The various "successor states" created numerous centres of patronage for scholars, bureaucrats and soldiers, stretching from Cordoba to Bukhara; at the same time, the new Iraqi Buyid (945–1055) and Egyptian Fatimid (969–1171) empires created the political space for the formation of Twelver and Isma'ili Shi'ism, respectively. However, the defining influences on the historiography of the medieval Middle East would not be Shi'i. Instead they were the consolidation of transregional networks of Sunni *'ulama* and their interactions with new Sunni military and political ruling elites. Sunni "successor states" first emerged in the East – notably the Samanids (circa 900–circa 1000) and then the Ghaznavids (977–1186). With the advent of Seljuk rule after circa 1040, Sunni government spread West, into western Iran and Iraq (1055–1194) and Anatolia (1081–1308). Then, following the fragmentation of Seljuk power, the Sunni Ayyubids (1171–1260) replaced the Shi'i Fatimids in Egypt and Syria; they were in turn replaced by the Mamluks from the middle of the thirteenth century.

Most of the developments in Islamic historiography in the medieval period are a function of this new sociopolitical context. In each of the medieval Sunni polities, military elites drawn from the marginal or frontier regions of the Islamic world sought to maintain power over the urban populations of the Muslim heartlands. At the same time, the *'ulama* (religious scholars) were consolidating their position as the guardians of Sunni Islam in these Islamic cities. The *'ulama* wrote history for two main reasons: they sought to articulate their understanding of their local and transregional identities within the Muslim polity (*umma*) or, having been coopted by the new military elites, they wrote history for propaganda purposes.[15] The military elites' religious credentials were often weak and they sought panegyric and propaganda to represent themselves as legitimate Sunni monarchs, as opposed to *arriviste* barbarian warlords. Nonetheless, besides this symbiosis between "alien military regimes" and the *'ulama* (Berkey 2003: 151), there were other motives prompting new kinds of historiography: bureaucrats composed histories for political education, and the rise of New Persian led to the *Shahnama* tradition that connected the warlords of the present to the heroic Persian past.

Five developments in the historiography of this period are particularly notable. Two primarily relate to the concerns of historiography, two to its genres, and one to language.

Changes in concern or focus relate to both time and place. First, there was a shift in the focus of history writing from the formative past towards the present. Whereas earlier historiographers had often given greatest detail to the formative period of Islam – the time of the Prophet, his Companions and Successors, and the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphates–medieval historiography was also concerned with contemporary or near-contemporary history. Second, local historiography matured. Although local histories were composed almost from the

beginning of Arabic historiography, the number and diversity of extant texts increases dramatically after the tenth century.

In terms of generic change, two more developments stand out – the development of prosopography in new directions and the rise in biographical and autobiographical writing. Prosopographies have a strong claim to be the most distinctive genre of medieval Islamic historiography (al-Qadi 1995). Very often their focus was also both local and contemporary. Whereas earlier prosopographical histories had tended to focus on the first generations of Companions and Successors or on tribal genealogy, medieval prosopography was more often than not about groups of religious scholars and other groups of eminent or learned men. Their scale was also transformed: some of the medieval prosopographical works are enormous, comprising thousands of names and running to dozens of volumes in the modern printed editions. Alongside prosopographical writing, single biographies of important men (and they were invariably men), together with autobiographies, also developed as separate genres.[16]

Finally, there is language. The great majority of Islamic historiography was still produced in Arabic, which remained the language of the educated elite across the Muslim world. However, as noted above, in the tenth century New Persian became a second elite language in the Islamic East. With the conquests of the Seljuk Turks who adopted Perso-Islamic court culture, the Persian language was spread further west in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thereafter, in Anatolia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and points East, all of the main genres of Islamic historiography were also composed in New Persian. This development was accompanied by the formation of the new quasi-historiographic genre of the *Shahnama* which remained unique to the Persian language.

In what follows, three of these developments will be discussed in more detail. The remaining two – the shift towards the contemporary, and the rise of Persian – apply throughout, and so are discussed where relevant under the rubrics of local historiography, prosopography, and biography. A final section, on chronography, examines how this genre of historical writing was also affected by the same processes of social and political change.

Local historiography

Local historiography has been described aptly as "a focus of concern" rather than a genre (*EI*², "Ta'rikh II.1.b" [R.S. Humphreys]). Various forms of chronicle as well as various kinds of prosopographical writing were the most common forms of local historiography produced in the medieval period. These texts deserve more scholarly attention than they have as yet received.[17] Nonetheless, it is already clear that the increase in local historiography in the medieval period was intimately related to two of the most important social and economic developments in medieval Islamic civilization: urbanization and the emergence of the *ʿulama* as the epistemic community that sustained, and to a great extent defined, Islam.

By most premodern standards, the cities of medieval Islam were vast. Estimates of the population of Cordoba, Qayrawan, and Nishapur place their peak populations at well over 100,000; at their greatest extent, medieval Cairo and Baghdad probably had populations numbering millions. The cities' inhabitants included landowning and mercantile elites, some of whom could afford to educate their sons to the level where they joined the ranks of the *ʿulama*. Hence, parts of the medieval urban populations were wealthy and literate, replicating or surpassing the conditions that had prevailed in ninth-century Baghdad. Mosques, madrasas (law colleges), booksellers, and libraries were features of the urban landscape, sustained by charitable trusts founded both by locals and by the regional magnates who needed their support.

The scale of the urbanization of much of the medieval Islamic world is a phenomenon that has yet to be satisfactorily explained. Some of the most detailed work thus far has focused on Iran where it is clear that at the time of their conquest, in circa 650, important Sasanian centres, such as Nishapur and Marw, had populations only in the low thousands. By 1100 they had grown to over 100,000 (Bulliet 1972; Williams 2007). Urbanization appears to have been driven in part by the conversion of the rural, non-Arab population to Islam: conversion entailed joining the new ruling urban elite and so also migration to the cities. In addition, very probably a significant agricultural revolution also contributed to sustaining the much larger urban populations (Bulliet 2004: 67–79; 2009).

Urbanization coincided with Islamization. Only in the tenth century or later would the majority of the population of many of the pre-Islamic urban centres have been Muslim (Bulliet 1979). With this Islamization of the regions came the growing importance of the local *ʿulama*, now the main sources of religious and legal authority in urban life (Bulliet 1994: 101–14). These *ʿulama* were at once both local and interregional in outlook. They supplied the preachers, teachers, lawyers, and judges in every Islamic city and were central to local religious, intellectual, and political life. However, they were also tied into the much wider networks of the Muslim polity (*umma*); indeed, with the collapse of effective centralized political power, they now constituted the *umma*, in a fashion analogous to the Christian priesthood in Latin Christendom. Their madrasa networks transcended regional political divisions. Some *ʿulama* traveled widely for the purposes of study and a few entered the service of the military elites who dominated the interregional politics of the medieval Muslim world.

This context helps explain both the form and the content of much local historiography. Local histories were one of the most important literary manifestations of the structure of medieval Muslim society, and one of the main articulations of the historical vision of the medieval *ʿulama*. Local histories tended to reflect great pride in the author's local region (Rosenthal 1968: 150), but often with reference to interregional sources of authority and prestige – the universal monotheist past and the interregional network of religious scholars who were monotheism's guardians in the present.

Two main forms were used to achieve these ends – chronography and prosopography. However, within these broad generic constraints, there was great variation, as one might expect of a genre rooted in the local and the particular. Three examples illustrate this diversity, which still demands more specific studies (Lambton 1991: 229). Chronographic histories include Ibn al-Azraq's (d. after 1181) *History of Mayyafariqin*. It discusses the various dynasties that ruled northern Mesopotamia down to the author's own time; in this it reflects the move to the contemporaneous in medieval writing. However, like other local historians, Ibn al-Azraq also situates Mayyafariqin in pre-Islamic history, appropriating a Christian foundation legend for the city (Munt 2010). Ibn al-Qalanisi's (d. 1160) *Continuation of the History of Damascus* is also an example of the rise of the contemporary in medieval historiography; Humphreys remarks that here the middle decades of the twelfth century "have almost the immediacy of a journal" (*EI²*, "Ta'rikh II.1.b"). In the East, one example of the many local Persian histories is the *History of Bukhara*. The extant text is a continuation of a translation and continuation by Qubawi (d. 1128) of the now-lost Arabic history of the same city by al-Narshakhi (d. 959; *E.Ir.*, "Historiography iii" [E. Daniel]).

Other local histories made the biographical and prosopographical their primary concern. Very often, this reflected the religious outlook of the compilers: thus al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's (d. 1071) *History of Baghdad*, Ibn 'Asakir's (d. 1176) compendious *History of the City of Damascus*, and Ibn al-'Adim's (d. 1262) *The Sought-for Object of Desire Regarding the History of Aleppo* are all systematic surveys of the *'ulama* and political figures of their respective cities. Such is their scope that they transcend the local by chronicling the transregional ties of the cities' scholars throughout the history of the *umma* (Khalidi 1994: 207; Melville 2000: 10–11). Other local prosopographies were much more eclectic: for example, Mufaddal al-Mafarrukhi's (fl. late 11th century) *Merits of Isfahan* classifies the inhabitants of Isfahan in pre-Islamic and Islamic times by occupation; it combines this material with much local geographical detail, literary embellishment, and poetry, and its thematic concerns are good government and the importance of listening to the advice of viziers, secretaries, and even the common people (Paul 2000).

Prosopography

If local historiography reflected the growing importance of the city in medieval Islam and very often the local pride of its *'ulama*, then prosopographical texts with a more universal scope pointed to the transregional networks through which the *'ulama* were connected to the universal Muslim *umma*. The emergence of the four main *madhhab*s (legal schools) of Sunni Islam in the eleventh and twelfth centuries coincided with the formation of networks of madrasas (law colleges). Among the earliest networks of such colleges were the Nizamiyya, founded in Iran and Iraq by the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092). *Tabaqat* works mapped out the history of these schools; dozens of examples are listed by al-Sakhawi

(d. 1497) in his *Open Denunciation of the Adverse Critics of Historians* (Rosenthal 1968: 414–20). One extant example of such a compilation of scholars' biographies is Ibn Abi Ya'la's (d. 1131) *Generations of the Hanbalis* which maps out the history of the law school founded by Ibn Hanbal (d. 855; Robinson 2003: 59).

The medieval period also saw the compilation of "biographical dictionaries" that dealt with classes of people other than the Companions of the Prophet and the religious scholarly community that succeeded them. For example, Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. 1229) compiled a vast biographical dictionary of "men of letters" (*udaba*, sing. *adib*), which concentrated on historians, poets, and philologists, and Ibn Abi Usaybi'a (d. 1270) wrote a dictionary of medical doctors (Khalidi 1994: 206). Likewise, Ibn Khallikan's (d. 1282) *Obituaries of the Notables* did not confine itself to a particular class of religious scholars, or a particular region, but rather presented about 5500 biographies of all manner of important Muslims, from a wide swath of the Muslim world; it is widely recognized as a new departure in biographical compilation in its "encyclopedic" scope and was much copied thereafter (Khalidi 1994: 206; Robinson 2003: 68).

Biography

Like prosopography, biography was in some respects as old as Islamic historiography itself. Although the *sira* of the Prophet had eclipsed other forms of biographical writing during the second half of the formative period, biographies of other noteworthy individuals did not completely disappear. Examples from the ninth century include the biographies of prominent scholars, such as Ibn Hanbal (Robinson 2003: 63). However, the medieval period witnessed an increase in biographical writing about "secular" political figures alongside the development of something resembling a distinct genre of autobiography.

One early instance of the former is the unusual *History of Mas'ud of Ghazna* (d. 1031) by Bayhaqi (d. 1077). However, although it focuses on the life of one monarch, Bayhaqi's text is more a history of a single reign than a biography. It is also much more an autopsy by a former courtier than a panegyric: Mas'ud's extraordinary reign, during which he conquered a large empire from his capital in Afghanistan, is seen as a source of examples for both edification and for warning; Bayhaqi both praises Mas'ud's virtues and criticizes his failings (Meisami 1999: 79–108). It has been suggested that this text belongs more to the tradition of administrative historiography begun by Ibn Miskwayh (d. 1030) at the Abbasid and Buyid courts in Baghdad (ibid. 81), rather than foreshadowing the sycophantic biographies composed in Ayyubid and Mamluk Syria during the next two centuries.

The latter are among the best-known examples of biographical writing in medieval Islam. They comprise two biographies of the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt and Syria, Saladin (r. 1171–1193), and three biographies of the first Mamluk ruler of the same region, Baybars (r. 1260–1277).[18] Again, all five texts reflect the close connections between courtiers and historiography in the medieval

period. However, unlike the more critical work of Bayhaqi, these biographies present their subjects as model kings, to be emulated and admired, rather than as models of both good and bad rule. That is, they were panegyric propaganda texts. Holt observes that they are, "symptoms of insecurity as much as tributes to merit" (1982: 27) – both Saladin and Baybars were military usurpers who needed to use historiography to present an image of themselves as pious Muslim rulers waging legitimate jihad against Crusaders, and Crusaders and Mongols, respectively, rather than as interlopers and political opportunists.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries are also the period in which Islamic autobiography matured. Again, Ayyubid and Mamluk Syria is prominent here. A recent survey identified at least eight autobiographical accounts by a "group of literati [who] were well aware of one another's careers and writings" (Reynolds 2001: 54). A second group of scholars in North Africa and Spain were also writing autobiographical material around the same period (ibid. 53, 55). However, although autobiographical writing dramatically increased in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the roots of autobiography are long; many of the prosopographies discussed above clearly depended upon autobiographical material composed by their subjects (ibid. 53). Indeed, one of the main motives for composing autobiography was the growth of prosopography and biographical dictionaries. Of the great philosopher and medical scientist Ibn Sina (Avicenna, d. 1037) it was said that "He related his experiences and described his life so that everyone else could dispense with his own account"; this was a self-conscious effort at the management of one's own image in historiography composed by others (ibid. 60).

Chronography

The chronographic tradition is marked by some continuity in form. Large-scale annalistic histories continued to be composed, many by religious scholars with a similar perspective on the historical past to al-Tabari, whose tradition they consciously perpetuated. As in the Byzantine world, "continuation" of the work of a predecessor was a common practice, creating a chain of annalistic texts, as described by the Syrian scholar Jamal al-Din al-Qifti (d. 1248).

> If you want continuous historical information well arranged, you must consult the work of Abu Ja'far al-Tabari, from the beginning of the world to the year 309 [921–2 CE]… This is followed by the work of Thabit [b. Sinan, d. circa 974] … Then there is the work of Hilal b. al-Muhassin b. Ibrahim al-Sabi [d. 1056], which coincides with the work of his maternal uncle Thabit and supplements it down to 447 [1055–6] … This was followed by the work of his son, Ghars al-Ni'ma Muhammad b. Hilal… Ibn al-Hamadhani's work then coincides with that of Ghars al-Ni'ma and supplements it down to the year 512 [1118–19]… Abu'l-Hasan continued Ibn al-Hamadhani's work … down to the year (5)27 [1132–3] … Al-'Afif [?] Sadaqa al-Haddad then continued Ibn al-Zaguni's work … and Sadaqa's work

in turn, was continued by Ibn al-Jawzi down to after the year (5)80 [1184–5].
Then Ibn al-Qadisi [d. 1235] continued Ibn al-Jawzi's work down to the year 616
[1219–20]. (Rosenthal 1968: 82–3)

Here al-Qifti is situating his own work at the end of three centuries of annalistic
scholarship. At the same time, al-Qifti's junior contemporary, 'Ali b. Muhammad
b. al-Athir (often, Ibn al-Athir, d. 1233) composed a universal history the *Kamil
fi'l-ta'rikh* ("Complete Chronography") which built upon al-Tabari's *History* but
took world history down to his own time.

Nonetheless, continuity of form can mask dramatic discontinuity of purpose.
For example, Samanid vizier Mansur b. Nuh (r. 961–976) sponsored the transla-
tion of al-Tabari's *History* into New Persian. It has recently been suggested that
Mansur had al-Tabari's chronicle translated not in order to bring about a "revival"
or "Renaissance" of the Iranian past, but rather in a propagandistic effort to assert
the Sunni legitimacy of the ruling military elites in the first language of many of
their subjects in Khurasan and Transoxiana. The most important constituency were
probably the local Sunni *'ulama*, who were most likely more comfortable in Persian
than in Arabic (Peacock 2007). Thus, the tenth-century translation pointed to the
shape of things to come; whereas al-Tabari had written as an independent religious
scholar, many similar histories composed in the medieval period were sponsored by
rulers keen to associate themselves with Sunni Islam and the local power of the
'ulama in the regions where they sought to claim legitimate authority.

Conclusions

The interrelationship between religious scholars and military and political elites,
exemplified by Bal'ami's translation of al-Tabari's *History*, is a defining feature of medi-
eval Islamic society in general, and so also of its historiography. Some of the roots of
this lie in the formative period of Islam, where the evolving relationship between the
Abbasid caliphs, the religious scholars, and existing methods of remembering the past
generated many of the basic generic forms of Islamic historiography. However, the
formative period is marked by a certain eclecticism: the high-point of "humanist"
scholarship about the past is probably the tenth century, when scholars such as
al-Mas'udi composed works that did not meet narrowly political or religious purposes.
With the fragmentation of political authority and the growth in trans-regional intel-
lectual networks that marks the onset of the "medieval" period of Islamic history, these
genres evolved in directions that were new but tended to reflect narrower, "orthodox"
concerns. New forms, such as the biographical dictionary and autobiographical writing,
and the development of older ones, such as local history, reflected the importance of
the *'ulama* – the biographical dictionary in particular, can be seen as an historiographic
articulation of the authority of the scholars. Other genres, such as the biography of a
single ruler and the contemporary chronicle, often reflected the needs of *arriviste*
warlords to position themselves as legitimate and pious Muslim rulers.

Because of the symbiosis between scholars and rulers, it was the *'ulama* who generated much of the surviving written evidence from early and medieval Islam, and so the wider picture in these periods of thinking about the past also tends to reflect their ideas. These ideas were rooted in the scriptural traditions of Islam that were closely related to other Judeo-Christian scriptural traditions. Indeed, in many ways Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all variations on worldview with many shared features – notably a Creator God who manifests his will through events on earth and whose chosen community reiterates its communal identity not just through the transmission of textual tradition by religious specialists but also through the perpetuation of institutional structures and religious practices. If the medieval Christians' ritual of communion collapsed time, with God's sacrifice of himself literally recurring during the sacrament, Muslims' prayer rituals also brought about a kind of eternal present – God's word in the Qur'an, repeated by the believers at prayer, existed outside time. Such religious rituals, rather than the texts from which we learn about them, were the main way in which medieval Muslims experienced ideas about the past beyond those pertaining to their family or immediate community.

Abbreviations

EI² P. Bearman, T. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs (eds.). 2011. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 12 vols. 2nd edn. Leiden. *Online Edition*: http://www. brillonline.com/ [accessed July 2013]

E.Ir. E. Yarshater (ed.). 1985-. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. 15 vols. to-date. New York. *Online Edition*: http://iranica.com/ [accessed July 2013]

Notes

1 I would like to thank the editor, Kurt Raaflaub, for the opportunity to contribute to this volume and for his patience and guidance during the production of this chapter. I would also like to thank Carole Hillenbrand, Christian Lange, and Chase Robinson for advice and assistance. Of course, I remain fully responsible for all faults that remain. All dates are CE unless noted otherwise.

2 The best survey of political events down to the 11th century remains Kennedy 2004.

3 See Berkey 2003: 179 for problems of periodization.

4 The structures outlined in this paragraph are set out elegantly by Gellner 1995; a fuller discussion of the period can be found in Berkey 2003. "Traditionist" (as opposed to "traditionalist") is used to refer to the mainstream form of Sunni Islam which emphasized the transmission of traditions about the Prophet and his Companions. See further below.

5 For all that the categories themselves are problematic, Berkey has demonstrated that they still have utility, and that the view of the sources is more "elite" than "popular": Berkey 1995: 39–40, 49.

6   The three most important recent monographs that survey historiography in the formative and classical periods of Islam are Khalidi 1994, Meisami 1999, and Robinson 2003. Rosenthal 1968; Lewis and Holt 1962 are still useful.

7   Indeed, such are the parallels and connections that a case has recently been made for the Christian and Islamic worlds being one "Islamo-Christian" civilization: Bulliet 2004.

8   The classic work on Latin Christian apocalyptic movements is Cohn 1970. On Islamic eschatology see Cook 2003; Tucker 2008; Filiu 2011. For early Islam as perhaps apocalyptic see Donner 2010: 78–82.

9   More quotidian social life, and the and the aspects of the past it reflects, has yet to receive the scholarly attention it deserves. However, a good introduction to Islamic belief and practice, which is sensitive to historical evolution and context, is Rippin 2012.

10   For example, the 9th-century annalistic historian al-Farghani was a senior military commander (*EI*², "al-Farghani" [F. Rosenthal]); 'Usama b. Munqidh (d. 1188), the famous composer of memoirs, served as a commander under Zangi (r. 1127–46) and Saladin (r. 1171–93), among others (*EI*², "Munkidh, Banu" [R.S. Humphreys]).

11   Two important additions to the generic range in the later, "classical" or "medieval", period (i.e., after circa 950) are the epic "New Persian" historical poem, known as the *Shahnama* that is first extant from the early 11th century (Meisami 1999: 37–46), and autobiography which, although it has earlier roots, fully developed in the 11th and 12th centuries. See further below.

12   The transmission of knowledge about the past in the very earliest centuries of Islam remains a highly contentious question: Donner 1998 attempts to explain the early development of historical consciousness; Schoeler 2006 addresses the question of oral and written transmission of knowledge. Recent discussions of early Abbasid-era historiography include El-Hibri 1999 and 2010. Borrut 2011 examines the transition from Umayyad to Abbasid times.

13   However, most scholars have concluded that the parallel development of a similar solution to similar problems is what more likely took place: Rosenthal 1968: 94; Schoeler 2006: 113.

14   Historiographical questions relating to the genealogical works of the 9th century have received comparatively little scholarly attention. On their potential for historical study, see now Ahmed 2011. I am grateful to Majied Robinson for some observations about the content of these texts.

15   On the *'ulama* and historiography in the medieval period, see Chamberlain 1994 and Hirschler 2006.

16   For a good discussion of the importance of prosopography, see al-Qadi 1995; on auto-biography, Reynolds 2001 now offers an excellent introduction and survey.

17   On local historiography in Persian, a special issue of *Iranian Studies* (vol. 33), edited and introduced by Charles Melville (Melville 2000), is an important recent contribution.

18   The two biographies of Saladin were composed by Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (d. 1201) and Baha' al-Din b. Shaddad (d. 1235); the three biographies of Baybars were written by Izz al-Din b. Shaddad (d. 1285), Muhyi al-Din b. Abd al-Zahir (d. 1292), Shafi' b. 'Ali (d. 1330).

References

Ahmed, A. 2011. *The Religious Elite of the Early Islamic Hijaz: Five Prosopographical Case Studies*. Oxford.

Al-Azmeh, A. 2007. *The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography*. Budapest and New York.

Berkey, J.P. 1995. "Tradition, Innovation and the Social Construction of Knowledge in the Medieval Islamic Near East." *Past and Present* 146: 38–65.

Berkey, J.P. 2003. *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800*. Cambridge.

al-Biruni, Abu al-Rayhan. 1879. *The Chronology of Ancient Nations: An English Version of the Arabic Text of the Athâr ul-bâkiya of Albîrûnî*. Ed. and trans. E. Sachau. London.

Bloom. J. 2001. *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World*. New Haven.

Borrut. A. 2011. *Entre mémoire et pouvoir. L'espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72–193/692–809)*. Leiden.

al-Bukhari, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad. 1862–1908. *Kitab al-Jami' al-sahih*. Ed. L. Krehl. 4 vols. Leiden.

Bulliet, R.W. 1972. *The Patricians of Nishapur*. Cambridge, MA.

Bulliet, R.W. 1979. *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*. Cambridge, MA.

Bulliet, R.W. 1994. *Islam: The View from the Edge*. New York.

Bulliet, R.W. 2004. *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*. 2nd edn. New York.

Bulliet, R.W. 2009. *Cotton, Climate and Camels in Early Islamic Iran: A Moment in World History*. New York.

Chamberlain, M. 1994. *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350*. Cambridge.

Cohn, N. 1970. *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*. Rev. and expanded edn. Oxford.

Cook, D. 2003. *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*. Princeton.

Crone, P. 2004. *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*. Edinburgh.

Daftary, F. 2007. *The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines*. 2nd edn. Cambridge.

Donner, F.M. 1998. *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*. Princeton.

Donner, F.M. 2010. *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*. Cambridge, MA.

El-Hibri, T. 1999. *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Harun al-Rashid and the Narrative of the Abbasid Caliphate*. Cambridge.

El-Hibri, T. 2010. *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History: The Rashidun Caliphs*. New York.

Filiu, J.-P. 2011. *Apocalypse in Islam*. Trans. M.B. DeBevoise. Berkeley.

Gellner, E. 1995. "Tribe and State in the Middle East." In Gellner, *Anthropology and Politics: Revolutions in the Sacred Grove*, 180–201. Oxford.

Gutas, D. 1998. *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th Centuries)*. Abingdon and New York.

Halm, H. 1996. *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*. Trans. M. Bonner. Leiden.

Hirschler, K. 2006. *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors*. London.

Holt, P.M. 1982. "Three Biographies of al-Zahir Baybars." In D.O. Morgan (ed.), *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, 19–29. London.

Howard-Johnston, J. 2008. "Al-Tabari on the Last Great War of Antiquity." In Kennedy 2008: 73–93.

Howard-Johnston, J. 2010. *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*. Oxford.

Hoyland, R.G. 2011. *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*. Liverpool.

Humphreys, R.S. 1989. "Qur'anic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography." In F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (eds.), *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, 271–90. Madison.

Kennedy, H. 2004. *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*. 2nd edn. Harlow.

Kennedy, H. (ed.). 2008. *Al-Tabari: A Medieval Muslim Historian and His Work*. Princeton.

Khalidi, T. 1994. *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*. Cambridge.

Lambton, A.K.S. 1991. "Persian Local Histories: The Tradition behind Them and the Assumptions of Their Authors." In B. Scarcia Amoretti and L. Rostagno (eds.), *Yad-nama in memoria di Alessandro Bausani*, 227–38. Rome.

Lewis, B., and P.M. Holt (eds.). 1962. *Historians of the Middle East*. Oxford.

Marsham, A. 2009. *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire*. Edinburgh.

Meisami, J. 1999. *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*. Edinburgh.

Melville, C. 2000. "Persian Local Histories: Views from the Wings." *Iranian Studies* 33: 7–14.

Munt, H. 2010. "Ibn al-Azraq, Saint Marutha, and the Foundation of Mayyafariqin (Martyropolis)." In A. Papaconstantinou, M. Debie, and H. Kennedy (eds.), *Writing True Stories: Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East*, 149–74. Turnhout.

Paul, J. 2000. "The Histories of Isfahan: Mafarrukhi's *Kitab Mahasin Isfahan*." *Iranian Studies* 33: 117–32.

Peacock, A. 2007. *Medieval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Bal'ami's Tarikhnama*. Abingdon and New York.

Pedersen, J. 1984. *The Arabic Book*. Trans. G. French. Princeton.

al-Qadi, W. 1995. "Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance." In G. Atiyeh (ed.), *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, 93–122. Albany, NY.

Reynolds, D. F. (ed.). 2001. *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. Berkeley.

Rippin, A. 2012. *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. 4th edn. London.

Robinson, C.F. 2003. *Islamic Historiography*. Cambridge.

Robinson, C.F. 2010. "The Violence of the Abbasid Revolution." In Y. Suleiman (ed.), *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, 226–51. Edinburgh.

Robinson, C.F. 2012. "Islamic Historical Writing, Eighth through the Tenth Centuries". In S. Foot and C.F. Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, II: 238–66. Oxford.

Rosenthal, F. 1968. *A History of Muslim Historiography*. 2nd edn. Leiden.

Saliba, G. 2007. *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA.

Sanders, P. 1994. *Ritual, Politics and the City in Fatimid Cairo*. Albany, NY.

Schoeler, G. 2006. *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*. Trans. U. Vagelpohl. Ed. J. Montgomery. London and New York.

Southern, R.W. 2004. "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing, 2: Hugh of St. Victor and the Idea of Historical Development." In R.J. Bartlett (ed.), *History and Historians: Selected Papers of R. W. Southern*, 30–47. Oxford.

Toorawa, S. 2005. *Ibn Abi Tahir Tayfur and Arabic Writerly Culture: A Ninth-century Bookman in Baghdad*. London and New York.

Tucker, W. 2008. *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shi'ite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq*. Cambridge.

Walker, P. 1978. "Eternal Cosmos and the Womb of History: Time in Early Islamic Thought." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9.3: 355–66.

Whitby, M. 2008. "Al-Tabari: The Period before Jesus." In Kennedy 2008: 11–26.

Williams, T. 2007. "The City of Sultan Kala, Merv, Turkmenistan: Communities, Neighbourhoods and Urban Planning from the Eighth to Thirteenth Centuries." In A.K. Bennison and A. Gascoigne (eds.), *Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World: The Urban Impact of Religion, State and Society*, 42–62. Abingdon and New York.

17

Sources and Scales of Classic Maya History

Nicholas P. Carter

If we think of history as a critical inquiry into what happened in the past by methods including interviews with eyewitnesses and recourse to archival sources, interpreted in the context of generalizing theories about the human condition and a naturalistic model of causality, then there is little evidence that the ancient Maya of the Classic period (circa 250 to 1000 CE) ever wrote history. Yet virtually all Maya texts betray an intense concern with the past that requires us to expand our definition of history to accommodate them. Classic Maya scribes wrote to recall significant past events for living audiences; to record contemporary events for future generations; and to tie the past, present, and future to the social and temporal situations in which those texts were written. Before anything beyond calendrical information could be read in the Maya hieroglyphic script, Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960) recognized that patterns of dates in a group of monuments from the Classic site of Piedras Negras suggested that the texts recorded historical events: the birth and accession of kings. Proskouriakoff's insight, that the fundamental point of Maya monumental texts was to record history, laid the groundwork for the epigraphic decipherment of the script. In turn, the Classic Maya texts have served modern epigraphers (for example, Houston 1987, 1993; Guenter 2003; Martin and Grube 2008) as rich sources of historical information about the societies which produced them. Indeed, almost the whole Maya corpus must be understood as history in a broad sense, as records of things that happened or were thought to have happened.

A historiographical consideration of that corpus demands that we try to understand the way at least literate Maya thought about the nature of time, and that we look for patterns in the way they wrote about time at different scales. It is also vital to understand the social and political contexts in which texts were produced and consulted. What did it mean for a claim about the past to be written down? Who wrote Maya history, and why? How, and by whom, were written, historical statements recalled to mind? Why did scribes record some events and not others, and how did the significance and nature of historical events change as the past receded?

Social and Intellectual Contexts of Classic Maya History

Periods of Maya culture history

The ethnic groups known today as the "Maya" are indigenous to the present-day countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras, concentrated in Highland Guatemala, Chiapas, and the Yucatan Peninsula. The very concept of a "Maya" cultural or ethnic identity, defined in opposition to non-Maya peoples, is a relatively recent product of the complex historical processes that have played out following the Spanish Conquest (Warren 1989). Nevertheless, the use of a shared courtly language, today called Classic Ch'olti'an (see Houston et al. 2000), probably fostered a sense of shared cultural identity throughout most of the Maya Lowlands, that is, the area north and east of the great chain of mountains running along the Pacific coast of Middle America, including the Department of Petén in Guatemala, the whole of Belize, and the Mexican states of Yucatán, Campeche, and Quintana Roo (Hammond 2000). The distribution of the thirty extant Mayan languages is concentrated in Highland Guatemala, with less historical linguistic diversity in the Lowlands – one Mayan language, Yucatec, is spoken across the entire northern Yucatan Peninsula – but an isolated branch of the Mayan family, Wastekan, is found as far west as Veracruz (Houston and Inomata 2009: 6–10).

The present chapter is concerned with the historical content of texts written in Classic Ch'olti'an, principally in the Lowlands but also at outlying centers in the uplands of Chiapas and northern Honduras (see figure 17.1), during the so-called Classic period. The traditional division of Maya, and generally Mesoamerican, culture history into the "Preclassic" (beginning around 2000 BCE with the emergence of the Olmec civilization along the Gulf Coast), "Classic" (commencing with demographic and political changes in the Central Lowlands around 250 CE), and "Postclassic" periods (the latter marked by the end of hieroglyphic monuments using the Long Count calendar [see below], in 909 CE; see Hammond 2000: 205) is somewhat problematic. The outstanding characteristics of "Classic" Maya civilization – divine kingship, monumental architecture, populations concentrated at regal-ritual centers with monumental architecture, and complex writing and calendrical systems – were all well established by the middle of the Late Preclassic period

Figure 17.1   Map of the Maya region, showing selected sites mentioned in this chapter. Map by Katharine Lukach and Thomas Garrison.

(roughly 400 BCE to 250 CE). Writing, an attenuated version of the Classic calendar, urbanism, and kingship all persisted through the Postclassic period across much of the Lowlands and even survived the arrival of the Spanish by more than a century in the remote Petén Lakes region (Scholes 1952; Rice et al. 1998; Houston and Inomata 2000; Sharer and Traxler 2006).

Still, the transitions between periods were undeniably marked by political and demographic upheavals that left the social landscape radically changed. The collapse

of some major Late Preclassic centers such as El Mirador (in northern Petén) may have been brought on by anthropogenic soil erosion leading to the silting up of reservoirs; smaller sites with more resilient water management systems, including Tikal, may have absorbed refugee populations, setting the stage for their political dominance in the epoch to come (Hansen et al. 2002). Similar catastrophes attended the "Maya collapse" at the end of the Classic period, although endemic warfare and the breakdown of large-scale political-economic structures probably contributed more to the disruption than did environmental factors (see, for instance, Demarest 2004; Rice and Rice 2004). The Early Postclassic period saw the Central Lowlands largely but by no means completely depopulated, while sites in Belize and the Yucatan Peninsula flourished (e.g., Pendergast 1986; Fox 1987; Masson et al. 2006).

The idea of Classic Maya civilization, then, remains a useful heuristic tool, especially because it coincides with the period during which most surviving Maya texts were produced, and, not coincidentally, with the phase of the development of the Maya script that is most legible to modern epigraphers (Houston 2000). While a few Preclassic monuments in the Highlands bear hieroglyphic texts, presumably in a Mayan language (see Coe and Kerr 1998 for an example from Kaminaljuyu, a major site now buried beneath Guatemala City), Maya writing during the Classic era was largely confined to the Lowlands. As a result, the history of the ancient Maya as derived from indigenous sources is nearly synonymous with Classic Maya history.

Classic Maya time

Although no explicit discussions of the subject have survived to the present, we can get some idea of ancient Maya conceptions of time from the way they wrote about temporal events. Like other Mesoamerican peoples, the Maya employed a cyclical calendar made up of two interlocking cycles, one of the numerals 1 through 13 and the other of 20 days named for religiously meaningful entities or phenomena: "Serpent," "Death," "Deer," and so on. Together these cycles comprised a ritual calendar of 260 days, each with a unique designation made up of a number and a name: 3 Chikchan ("Serpent") would be followed by 4 Kimi ("Death"), which would be followed by 5 Manik ("Deer").[1] Each position in this cycle, which modern scholars refer to as the *tzolk'in*, had a divinatory association, auspicious or inauspicious. With the 261st day, the cycle would begin again. Running in tandem with the ritual almanac was a "secular," solar year of 365 days organized in a way more intuitively familiar to Western readers. This second calendar, the *ha'b* ("year"), was divided into 18 months of 20 days plus one unlucky, five-day period at the end. Any given day thus occupied a position in two cyclical, but differently structured, calendars: 3 Serpent might be the 6th day of the month Suutz' ("Bat"), to be followed by 4 Death, the 7th of Suutz', then by 5 Deer, the 8th of Suutz'. Because of the two cycles' different lengths, each combination of *tzolk'in* and *ha'b* dates repeats exactly once every 18,980 days, or about 52 years.

In epigraphic parlance, this 52-year double cycle is called the Calendar Round (Thompson 1950; Martin and Grube 2008: 12–13; Stuart 2011).

The Classic Maya also employed a linear system for keeping track of time, the so-called Long Count. The system used a vigesimal system of numeration – at least for the most part, and at least at the scales of time with which most Maya historical records are concerned. As with the cyclical calendars, the basic unit in the Long Count was the day, or *k'in*, from the word for "sun." 20 days made one *winik* or *winal*; *winik* is also the word for "person," and here we must imagine an analogy based on a count of ten fingers plus ten toes. 18 *winals* made one *ha'b* of 360 days. The number approximates the length of the solar year, but the Classic Mayan name is potentially misleading: the 360-day Long Count *ha'b* is not the same as the 365-day *ha'b* of the Calendar Round. To avoid confusion, many scholars use the Yucatec term *tun*, "stone," to designate the 360-day period. 20 *tuns* make up one *k'atun* (the Classic term was *winikha'b*, "twenty years"), and 20 *k'atuns* make up one *bak'tun* (Classic Mayan *pih*) of 144,000 days, or almost 400 years (Stuart 2011).

The number of days in each of these groups is recorded using a place system of notation very much like the Arabic, but with possible values of 0 through 19 allowed in most places, and 0 through 17 in the *winals* place. Thus, the date 9.10.11.17.19 (nine *bak'tuns*, 10 *k'atuns*, 11 *tuns*, 17 *winals*, and 19 days) would be followed by 9.10.12.0.0 (nine *bak'tuns*, 10 *k'atuns*, 12 *tuns*, 0 *winals*, and 0 days). Since each day in the Long Count is also a day in each of the cyclical calendars, the Maya could write each day using all three calendars at once: e.g., 9.10.11.17.19, 4 Kawak, the 7th of K'ank'in.

It will immediately be perceived that the Long Count counts forward from some point in time – August 13, 3114 BCE, to be exact – raising the question of how the Maya could have written about dates prior to that point, as they in fact did from time to time. It is also apparent that a system using only five numeric places would pose some problems to anyone wanting to write about dates in the far future. As it happens, however, the Long Count does not actually begin on August 13, 3114 BCE. That day, which the Classic Maya wrote, not as 0.0.0.0.0, but as 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8th Kumk'u, is a mathematically significant station since it does represent a functional starting point for the five numeric places in common use. Several texts discuss it, in oblique terms, as the date of something like a new creation or a cosmic reordering. Still, it was far from the beginning of historical or even mythological time. Nor does the Long Count necessarily have an upper limit, for there are many numeric places above the *bak'tuns* – theoretically infinitely many, in fact, just as in any other place-notational system. It was rarely necessary to use those places in recording dates, but the Maya could and did make exceptions, invoking larger counts of days to write about the distant past and future.

Even though Mayan languages normally use a vigesimal count of numbers, that standard breaks down in the higher place values of the Long Count in a way that strikingly illustrates the complexity and esotericism of the Classic Maya scholarly tradition. As David Stuart (2011) has recently demonstrated, under normal circumstances – for most of the whole retroactively calculated Long Count calendar – 20

bak'tuns make one *piktun*, or 2,880,000 days; 20 *piktuns* make one *kalabtun*; 20 *kalabtuns* make one *kinchiltun*, and so on. One text, Stela 1 at the site of Cobá, in the present-day Mexican state of Quintana Róo, opens with a reference to the famous August 13, 3114 BCE date. The scribes who carved the stela opted to express this date with no fewer than 19 numeric places above the *bak'tun* – all of them with a value of 13 – before arriving at a date of 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8th Kumk'u. *However*, once all of these numeric places, from the *bak'tun* on up, reached 13, the system began to reset itself in increments. The next *bak'tun* ending, on December 20, 2720 BCE, was not 14.0.0.0.0, 3 Ajaw 13th Ch'en, but 1.0.0.0.0, 3 Ajaw 13th Ch'en. A single passage on a Late Classic hieroglyphic panel at Palenque makes two further points clear: first, that the count of *bak'tuns* will accumulate to 19, as before the present era, before the number in the *piktuns* place will change; and second, that that number will change to 1, not to 14, just as the *bak'tuns* did in 2720 BCE. In other words, all *piktuns* except the present one contained 20 *bak'tuns*, but the current one contains 33; all previous *kalabtuns*, the next place up, contained 20 *piktuns*, but the current *kalabtun* contains 33 of those. Presumably the same pattern obtains for the rest of the higher places.

This staggered resetting of the higher-order cycles, so jarringly unexpected from a contemporary, Western perspective, suggests an attitude towards time more numerological than mathematical. 13 and 20, after all, are the key numbers of the *tzolk'in*, so it is fitting that they should be incorporated into the Long Count at enormous temporal scales. Even so, the true potential scale of the calendar is not securely established. The Cobá inscription counts 10,331,233,010,526,315,789,473,684,112,000 days, or a little more than 28,285,978,483,664,581,446,157,328,238 years, since some unexpressed zero-date (Stuart 2011). Yet no such true "zero-date" is ever referenced in any known texts, and nothing in the structure of the Long Count inherently prevents the addition of even higher places. It may be, then, that the Classic Maya did not think of temporal existence as having any true starting point, and that the shift in the counting rules commencing with one pivotal date in the calendar was simply a way of expressing an infinity of past time while situating known human history in a sacred present. Certainly the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the highland Quiché Maya, speaks of other, failed creations prior to the current one (Christenson 2007).

The existence of two calendrical systems, one cyclical, the other linear, facilitated two complementary ways of thinking and writing about time. The Long Count allowed Maya scribes to situate events relative to one another in absolute time in basically the same way that contemporary historians would do. At the same time, even linear Classic Maya time was hardly Newtonian: there are hints that this kind of time was conceived of both as in some sense animate and as a sacred, steadily accumulating burden of days brought one by one into being, each in its turn. Maya calligraphy and iconography suggest time's animacy. Normally, Maya numerals were written as clusters of bars and dots: a dot stood for a unit of one, and a bar for a unit of five, so that the numeral 3 would be written with three dots, while 19 would be written with three bars (making 15) plus four dots (figure 17.2). However, the numerals 1 through 20 and the glyphs for the lowest five Long
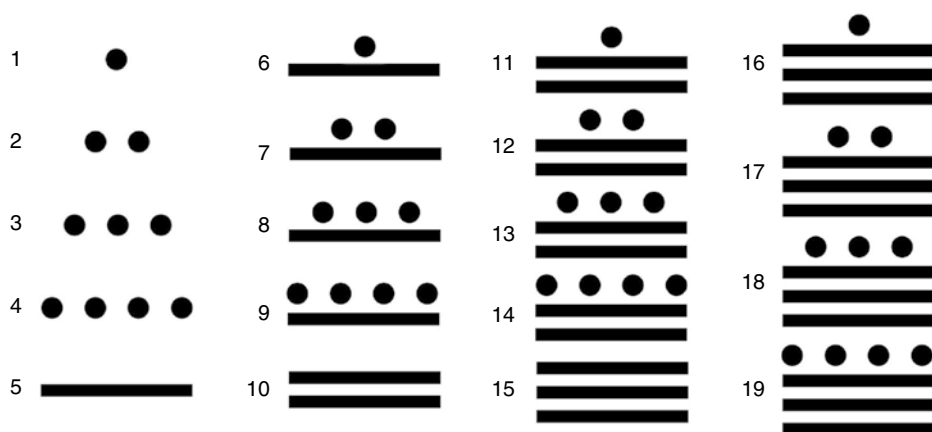
Figure 17.2 Bar-and-dot numeration.
Drawing by the author.

Count cycles could all be written with so-called "head variants," or even with full-figure glyphs depicting gods and supernatural animals. Hints of the accumulating nature of linear time come from one of the best-known Maya monuments, the sarcophagus of K'inich Janab Pakal, king of Palenque between 615 and 683 CE. The sarcophagus is inscribed along the sides with a record of the ancestors who preceded the king in rulership and death, poetically described here as "entering the road" to the afterlife. Their death dates are given in the Calendar Round, not the Long Count, but the structure of the text is linear: "On 5 Kaban, the 5th of Mak, Ahkal Mo' Nahb entered the road. On 5 Kib, the 4th of K'ayab, K'an Joy Chitam entered the road …". The opening clause describes the deaths of Pakal's forebears as a divine burden or responsibility: *patbuuy u kuchil ixiim*, "the burden of the Maize God takes shape" (Stuart and Stuart 2008).

Nevertheless, the cyclical paradigm stands out more prominently in Classic Maya discourse about time. If the Long Count as a whole has a direction, any given place within the Long Count still functions cyclically, and great ritual significance was attached to the completion of certain increments of time: most notably *bak'tun* and *k'atun* endings, but also periods of ten and five *tuns*. A major responsibility of Maya royalty was to celebrate these dates with appropriate ceremony. Indeed, the fact that those period-ending rituals were themselves events of contemporary historical significance, recorded on public monuments of stone, contributed to the early misconception that Classic Maya scribes wrote about the passage of time itself rather than about events within time (e.g., Morley 1915; see Coe 1992).

Classic Maya society and geopolitics

While the details of Classic Maya political organization were the subject of controversy in recent decades,[2] it is generally agreed that the Maya Lowlands were divided

among a number of kingdoms. Some of these "independent" polities were, as it were, more equal than others, and those preeminent states dominated the Lowland world through a variety of strategies, including warfare (e.g., Houston 1983; Martin 2001; Golden 2003), the establishment of family ties with the ruling houses of subordinate polities (Martin 2008), and, occasionally, the foundation of colonies (Houston 1993). Each polity might contain multiple centers of settlement, but power and population were both focused on urban cores which served as the seat of regal and ritual authority.

Internally, Classic Maya states were governed by hereditary elites headed by a "holy lord" (*k'uhul ajaw*). Since, unlike in the ancient Near East or Mediterranean, no administrative documents survive from Maya courts, the exact balance of power in Maya kingdoms is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the monumental texts suggest that authority was centered on the kings, at least in a formal, ritual sense. Their births, lives, and deaths, almost alone of the whole mass of people who lived during the Classic period, are memorialized in the extant corpus of hieroglyphic inscriptions. The exceptions are a limited number of family members and courtiers, whose social status derived more from their relationships or services to the kings than from any independent source of authority (Houston and Stuart 2001).

The vast majority of the population did not belong to that elite class. They were economically and linguistically diverse, and included farmers, merchants, artisans, and slaves; they were the driving economic force behind the few expressions of ancient Maya material and intellectual culture which have happened to survive to the present day, and they were as fully endowed with agency as the people of any other civilization. Yet nonelites are almost entirely excluded from the hieroglyphic record, excluded to a degree which would be unthinkable in a historical tradition concerned with exploring the whys and wherefores of political actions. Low-ranking individuals may be shown in certain contexts and certain media – scenes of court life painted on ceramic vessels or an intriguing set of murals at Calakmul that probably depict a market (Carrasco Vargas and Colón González 2005; Carrasco Vargas et al. 2009) – but there is not one monumental, historical text in which a Classic Maya commoner is specified by name as having *done* anything.

Given the elite monopoly on the production of history, some scholars have cast doubt on the reliability of Classic Maya texts dealing with even the short-term past, framing them as "propaganda" by which rulers and lesser nobles "increase[d] the prestige of [their] position[s] relative to others" (Marcus 1992: 16). The dates of birth and death attributed to certain individuals in a society where old age meant venerability and power have come under particular scrutiny. A long-running debate over whether Palenque's K'inich Janahb Pakal was 80 years old at the time of his death in 683 CE (as all available epigraphic sources agree) or about half that age (e.g., Ruz Lhuillier 1977; Marcus 1992) has finally been resolved by new osteological investigations (Tiesler and Cucina 2004) indicating an advanced age at death. In this case, archaeologists are lucky to have a well-preserved and clearly identified skeleton, but this is rare: we have no osteological data at all for the vast majority of persons named in the hieroglyphic corpus.

Certainly, all Classic Maya texts were commissioned, composed, and produced by human beings in particular social situations and with particular goals and interests in mind. Many of those interests were recognizably political; as we will see, some perspectives, and some stories, were given prominence in pursuit of those interests, while others were suppressed. Nevertheless, there are problems with taking the "propaganda" model of Maya historical writing too far. For one thing, there is little reason to believe that the majority of the people living in any Maya center were literate enough to make the written word, by itself, an effective means of mass communication (Houston and Stuart 1992). As to the supposed falsification of biographical details, we know that Maya rulers took an interest in one another's lives and deaths: an incised bone needle buried with the Late Classic Tikal ruler Jasaw Chan K'awiil bears a list of death dates for several foreign lords (Jones 1987). As discussed below, rival courts presented contradictory accounts of one another's political histories, including different dates and circumstances for royal accessions. Yet it seems from the inscriptions that no Maya ruler ever thought to present his hostile counterpart at another site as younger than he was, or to accuse him of lying about his age. We must either attribute this silence to a basic and widespread failure of imagination among Maya propagandists, or admit that it was not in fact common practice for rulers to add decades to their lives by pseudo-historical fiat. Ideologically charged as Maya histories were, widely acknowledged facts could not simply be rewritten, nor could new facts be easily invented. Rather, Classic Maya historical writing seems to have been a field on which elites worked out their divergent political interests within a narrow range of possible claims about what the past had been, which events had mattered, and which actors had been important.

Sources of Classic Maya History

As David Stuart (1998) points out, nearly all surviving Classic texts can be described as dedicatory inscriptions. That is, whatever other information they contain, one of their primary functions in their original social contexts was to commemorate the production or ownership of venerated objects belonging to members of the sociopolitical elite: anything from weaving bones to decorated drinking vessels to buildings. Dedication events form the rhetorical foci of most texts, even if, in longer inscriptions, those events are anticipated by accounts of other significant events taking place over a span of sometimes thousands of years. For architectural dedications, the relevant expression is usually *ochi k'ahk'*, "the fire enters," referring to the ritual censing of a building; texts on ceramics typically use one of a number of verbs probably describing their formal presentation. Shorter texts dispense with these verbs to focus on the object and its owner: *utu'p*, "it is his earspool," or *u puutz' baak*, "it is her weaving bone."

Is there any sense, though, in which these kinds of texts can be called historical? Insofar as they recall events in the distant past, some lengthy dedications at least

approach Western ideas of what history should be. Yet as Stuart (1998) suggests, even the tersest of dedicatory texts record events of ritual and political import in the courtly contexts in which they were produced. The point of such inscriptions was, in a sense, to materialize history as it happened, to commemorate mortal human beings on objects that would outlast them, and to situate those objects in a larger temporal context. Stelae erected in honor of *k'atun* or *bak'tun* endings exemplify these concerns: they describe the object dedicated, often giving it a proper name; they name the king who oversaw the period-ending rituals; and, in rare cases (e.g., Stela 31 at Tikal), they provide retrospective accounts of important events in the king's life and in the life of the polity – what can only be called history. Other texts, especially on portable objects, may have commemorated events to which they do not explicitly refer. Stephen Houston (2009) suggests that some high-quality ceramics whose dedicatory texts describe them as "the drinking vessel of" (*yuk'ib*) a given individual were actually given away to other persons at age-grade ceremonies and other important occasions, serving thereafter as reminders of the event and of the political and personal relationships subsisting between donor and recipient.

At the same time, to take dedicatory inscriptions as representative of the whole Classic Maya tradition of writing about the past may be misleading. After all, the texts that have survived to the present day are mainly those which were incised in jade or bone, painted on pots or walls, sculpted in stone or stucco: precisely the materials which tend to be preserved in the archaeological record and which the ancient Maya selected for their durability as appropriate for making objects of veneration. The amount of material written on perishable items in Maya antiquity and now lost forever is incalculable, but painted ceramics depict glyphs on clothing, accounting records on strips of paper or the bark of vines, and – most frustrating to epigraphers – screenfold books of bark paper, handsomely bound in jaguar skin.

Only four Maya hieroglyphic books – the Dresden, Paris, Madrid, and Grolier Codices – exist today, none of them Classic in origin. The Madrid Codex may have been compiled in the Itzaaj capital of Tayasal, near present-day Flores, Guatemala, after the arrival of the Spanish; the rest were probably produced in the northern Yucatán Peninsula after 1200 CE (Marhenke 2003). None of the four contain historical information about human activity, although the Dresden Codex does include some mythological passages pertaining to the beginning of the present world. Nevertheless, there are strong reasons to believe that Classic Maya scribes did write about the past in paper books. The Colonial jurist Alonso de Zorita (1963) recalled seeing books in the Guatemalan Highlands which recorded events as distant as the eighth century CE. Nothing, however, indicates that these were hieroglyphic texts, reflecting the syntax and vocabulary of a spoken Mayan language, rather than the kind of linguistically "open," narrative pictographic documents produced by the Postclassic peoples of western Mesoamerica (see Houston 2004). Spanish friars and conquistadores of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries consistently mention a few documentary genres among the Yucatec Maya, including almanacs, prophecies, and annals (e.g., de Alpuche 1579; de Palomar

1579; Chi 1582; de Cogolludo 1688 [cited in Means 1917]). In evangelizing the last independent Maya kingdom, at Tayasal, Fray Andrés de Avendaño y Loyola learned to read and interpret the Itzaaj prophecies, using them to persuade the king, Kan Ek', that the time was at hand for him and his people to convert to Christianity (Means 1917). Diego López de Cogolludo (1688) claimed to know of an indigenous archive in the town of Tixualahtun "where were preserved all the events, as is done in Spain at the Archivo de Simancas." If such an archive existed, it was likely destroyed by Spanish missionaries, among whom Diego de Landa – who infamously burned 27 books at an *auto da fé* in Maní – was far from the only or even the first authority to attempt the destruction of indigenous literatures (López Medel 1565; Gates 1978).

Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that the Classic Maya of the Central Lowlands also kept and consulted histories. That ancient events were recorded in monumental texts requiring significant investments of time and resources implies the existence of a larger corpus of historical material from which they could be selected. In a few cases it is even possible to propose that certain surviving texts were derived from a now-lost paper original, and to reconstruct some details of that original text. At least ten unprovenanced Late Classic vessels, almost certainly from the Mirador Basin, and painted in the so-called "codex style" – with black, dark brown, or red lines painted in slip on creamy backgrounds in imitation of screenfold manuscripts – record the accessions of between six and eighteen kings of the Kan dynasty (Martin 1997). The texts repeat variations on the same statement, over and over: a Calendar Round date; a verbal clause, *ch'amaw k'awiil*, referring to the taking of a sacred effigy scepter during the accession ceremony; the name of the king who came to power; and his royal title, "holy Kan lord." While the Kan lords ruled at Calakmul beginning around the early seventh century CE, they were probably based at Dzibanche, to the north, in the Early Classic period (Martin 2005; Stuart and Houston 1994: 28–29). The rulers named on the "Dynastic Series" of vessels, however, do not fit the historical record of the Kan line as known from monumental texts. As a further complication, the Calendar Round dates are presented alone, with no Long Count dates to anchor them to linear time, and many of them are mathematically impossible in the normal structure of the Calendar Round. One possibility is that the lists are fictional, representing a constructed past for the dynasty, but more likely they name real personages from the Late Postclassic period whom the Late Classic Kan kings saw as their ancestors and forebears in office (Martin 1997).

Whether invented or remembered, the ceramic king lists give every indication of having been copied from a single document. They were painted by different artists whose varying degrees of skill are evident from their work. On several of the vessels, the texts break off abruptly in the middle of a sentence, as though it were less important to the artists to complete the narrative than to present excerpts from an important text available for consultation elsewhere. In a few cases, glyphs are repeated or transposed, rendering passages nonsensical, in ways that savor more of

(a)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

| 3-IMIX | 7-CHAK-SIHOOM | CH´AM-AW-K´AWIIL | [name of king] | K´UHUL-ka-KAN-AJAW | 3-ETZ´NAB | 1-TE´-MUWAAN-ni | CH´AM-AW-K´AWIIL | [name of king] | K´UHUL-ka-KAN-AJAW |

[ta] ux ha' huk-[te'] chaksihoom ch'amaw k'awiil [name of king], k'uhul kanal ajaw. [ta] ux etz'nab jun-te' muwaan ch' amaw k'awiil [name of king], k'uhul kan ajaw.

On 3 Imix 7th sip took the *k'awiil* scepter [name of king], the holy Kan lord. On 3 Etz'nab 1st Muwaan took the *k'awiil* scepter [name of king], the holy Kan lord.

Figure 17.3 Excerpted passages from three vases in the Dynastic Series, showing consistencies in glyphic spelling and typical copyists' mistakes. Note the consistent use of a head variant for the numeral 3 in position 1, the date 3 Imix, as opposed to bar-and-dot numerals in positions 2, 6, and 7. All three scribes omitted the optional numeric classifier *te'* from the *ha'b* date in position 2, but included it in the date in position 7 (8 in passage c). Note too the errors in all three passages: the scribe in passage (a) recorded a date 4 Etz'nab in position 6, where the others have 3 Etz'nab; passage 2 omits the "accession" verb phrase, *ch'amaw k'awiil*, in position 3; and the scribe in passage (c) has transposed the glyphs in positions 7 and 8. Glyphs arranged for legibility of presentation. Drawing by the author after photographs by Justin Kerr (n.d.): (a) after K6751, (b) after K1371, and (c) after K2794.

errors in transcription than in composition. Most convincingly, however, certain details of glyphic spelling are consistent throughout the whole congeries of vessels. It will be recalled that Maya scribes could write numbers with bar-and-dot notation or with head variants. They could also choose to write or omit a preposition, *ta* or *ti* ("on," in this context) before *tzolk'in* dates, and a numeric classifier, *te'*, in between the number and the month name in *ha'b* dates. None of these choices affected the meaning of a text, which would probably have been read out loud in just the same way, with prepositions and numeric classifiers included as the grammar of spoken Classic Mayan required, whether those elements were written or not. There is a strong tendency for dates in the Dynastic Series to be spelled in the same way from pot to pot, with identical uses of numeral variants and grammatical particles, regardless of individual artists' competence or calligraphic style. Given the number of scribes involved and the flexibility of the Maya script, these orthographic choices were surely made by a single original author, then copied onto the vessels. When mistakes appear in these texts – and they are surprisingly common – they tend to support that possibility: glyphs are sometimes transposed or left out, as if the scribes were paying more attention to the forms of the signs than to their syntax (figure 17.3).

Scales of Classic Maya History

From the extant corpus, we can identify five scales of time at which the Classic Maya wrote about the past. Some texts were written nearly contemporaneously with the events they commemorate, and indeed these probably constitute the majority of surviving inscriptions. Others deal with events taking place over the course of a few years or decades, within a single human lifespan. Moving to longer spans, we encounter inscriptions dealing with events that occurred some generations in the past. For authors writing during the Late Classic period, after 600 CE, this could be said to include anything that had happened since the sociopolitical disruptions associated with the beginning of the Early Classic phase, around 250 CE – potentially hundreds of years in the past, but still well within archival memory. At still greater depths, we find references to peoples, places, and events of the Late Preclassic period and even earlier times. Some of these events may be quite fictional; others, however, probably contain at least a grain of truth. The very most ancient events in Classic Maya texts can confidently be described as mythical. These include the doings of gods and mythical ancestors many thousands of years in the past, in some cases long before there were any human beings in the Americas.

The themes of inscriptions tend to vary with their time depth. Texts dealing primarily with events in the very short-term past are mainly of two kinds. The first type are the dedicatory texts on ceramic vessels, which almost never record the date when the vessels were made, but which were inscribed (in slip or paint, or by molding or carving) just before or after they were fired. Dedications on other portable objects can be placed in this category as well. The second type are the texts on most stelae erected to commemorate Long Count period endings. Unlike the dedicatory sequences on vessels, these texts do, of course, provide dates, but they too were probably inscribed shortly before or after the dedication of the monuments. The arrival of the period ending, the performance of associated rituals by the local king, the planting (*tz'ap*) of the stela, and the production of the text are all condensed into a single rhetorical and historical moment. Rituals on "echo" dates – previous period endings or other numerologically significant dates – sometimes appear in these inscriptions, but they feature mainly as preiterations of the main event. In the succeeding pages we will explore selected texts to consider the ways in which Maya scribes dealt with larger historical scales, and the purposes to which different kinds of pasts were put.

The reexamined life: biographical history at Piedras Negras

At the multidecadal scale, texts commissioned by persons then living offer glimpses of how members of the Maya elite thought in retrospect about their own lives and the lives of those close to them. Such accounts are of interest for what they can tell us about how events in living memory were reinterpreted to fit emerging narratives.

That those narratives, belonging to the monumental record, are inescapably political does not alter the fact that it is at this scale that we move from commemoration into a mode that is clearly historical. Nevertheless, essential elements of the Western historical tradition – motive, causality, summations of lives and personalities – are absent from the explicit narratives and, at best, can be partially reconstructed from context. Here, of course, context means not only what is said in the texts at hand, but when and by whom it is said, and (what is more difficult) what is left unsaid.

Three Late Classic monuments – Stelae 1, 3, and 8 – from Piedras Negras, together with a continuous inscription on four *Spondylus* shell ornaments (see Stuart 1985b), record the pieces from which such a biographical history can be assembled. All three stelae were dedicated by the late seventh- and early eighth-century ruler K'inich Yo'nal Ahk, among other things to commemorate anniversaries of his accession to the throne in 686 CE. Yet their texts, and the portraits on two of the stelae, empha-size, to varying degrees, certain events in the life of his wife, Lady Winikha'b Ajaw, a noblewoman from an allied site (Martin and Grube 2008: 145–47). We will first review the events recorded in the texts, then consider their historical meanings as they might have been understood in Lady Winikha'b Ajaw's time and as we can interpret them today.

Born in 674 CE, Lady Winikha'b Ajaw was twelve years old in November of 686, when she underwent a period of five days' "concealment" or "covering" (*mak*) which concluded with her "display" (*naw*) before K'inich Yo'nal Ahk, more than a decade her senior. The next day, she was presented again, this time to a woman (her name is too eroded to read) described as "the wife of Kooj, the youth, the holy Piedras Negras lord." This second presentation is recorded only on Stela 8, while the other two monuments record only the first. K'inich Yo'nal Ahk was still the crown prince of Piedras Negras at this time and known by his preregnal name, Kooj ("Puma"), but his aged father, Itzam K'an Ahk I, died only a few days after these presentation events (Stuart 1985b), to be succeeded within weeks by his son. The inscriptions skip ahead twenty years to one-*k'atun* anniversary of K'inich Yo'nal Ahk's accession in 706; to the birth of Lady Winikha'b Ajaw's daughter, Lady Juntahn Ahk, in 708; and finally to the 25-tun accession anniversary in 711. Winikha'b Ajaw was involved in both anniversary ceremonies, and on the second occasion, her husband made her the gift of a carved stone bench.

Thus far, and no farther, the inscriptions take us. If we have in these four texts a more intimate portrait of Lady Winikha'b Ajaw than of virtually any other Classic Maya personage, it is a testament to the lack of biographical detail in the monu-mental corpus. The accession anniversary rites indicate the importance of cyclical time even on the scale of individual careers, but the skeletal narratives invite more questions from modern readers than they answer. Who was K'inich Yo'nal Ahk's first wife, and why did he take a second? Even the nature of the protagonist's "covering" and subsequent "display" is unclear. While no known Maya text explic-itly records a marriage ceremony, these events were certainly preliminary to a royal wedding – but by how long? Why were they, rather than the marriage itself, the focus of scribal attention?

It is tempting to infer that the young Winikha'b Ajaw's arrival at Piedras Negras was connected to Itzam K'an Ahk's imminent death, but the texts imply a larger political and personal story which must also be considered as part of the history they relate. Lady Winikha'b Ajaw's commemoration on three stelae is clearly connected to her role as Juntahn Ahk's mother. Yet the silences in the texts hint at a series of tragedies and frustrations: infertility, miscarriages, and deaths in infancy could all account for the lack of sons, and for the more than twenty years' delay before the birth of this first recorded daughter. Whatever the joys or tribulations of her private life, by 706 CE it had become important publicly to remember Lady Winikha'b Ajaw's premarital ceremonies, which had not been memorialized at the time they occurred. The most likely explanation may be that Lady Winikha'b Ajaw was being groomed as the mother of K'inich Yo'nal Ahk's heir, and that her public biography was being written to legitimize her in that role. Hence the emphasis on nuptial decorum, with sequestration rituals properly observed and with K'inich Yo'nal Ahk's senior wife casting an approving eye on the young bride. Hence, too, the connections between Winikha'b Ajaw and the anniversaries of K'inich Yo'nal Ahk's coronation. It can hardly have been accidental that a carved bench, a symbol of royal authority, was bestowed on her on the day of the commemoration ceremony following Lady Juntahn Ahk's birth. From among all the acts making up a human life, a few dates and events were selected for public presentation, and Lady Winikha'b Ajaw's past was reinterpreted with an eye toward the future.

Biographies of victory and humiliation: persons, politics, and counts of captives

Another Classic Maya historical theme on the scale of a single career, but much more common in the inscriptions than the kind of biographical information we have for Lady Winikha'b Ajaw, is the commemoration of captures in battle. A primary goal of Classic Maya warfare – as indeed in other Mesoamerican cultures before and after the Classic period – was to take enemies captive, as opposed to putting them to flight or slaughtering them on the battlefield. Notwithstanding the imperial ideology of the Late Postclassic Triple Alliance, in which the hearts of captive warriors were supposed to sustain the Sun, Mesoamerican captive-taking was not a purely ideological goal, superstitiously pursued at the expense of military effectiveness. Rather, as can be inferred from Classic Maya discussions and representations of capture and captivity, the captive-taking tradition was a central mechanism of politics within and among polities, ideologically charged to be sure, but ultimately pragmatic and flexible. Some of the earliest monumental sculptures in Mesoamerica commemorate the submission or sacrifice of captives, who are identified as specific individuals by their calendrical names (as on a carved stone slab from the Oaxacan site of San José Mogote [Marcus 1976b: 43–45]) or by glyphic headdress elements. Rather than recording that military units fighting on behalf of the whole polity had captured some number of anonymous enemies, Classic Maya scribes and artists

were likewise concerned with the personal identities of winners and losers in war, and regularly employed three techniques to record them.

First, the crucial moments of the drama – the capture of an enemy warrior or his subsequent display, torture, or execution – could be represented on stone monuments or, more rarely in the surviving corpus, on painted murals or ceramic vessels (Miller 1986; Houston and Inomata 2009: 145). Such presentations might emphasize the role of the captor or the victorious king; alternatively, they might focus on the misery and degradation of the captive, to the point of excluding the other actors from the scene altogether (Houston et al. 2006). In either case, both victor and victim are usually named somewhere in the mainly figural composition, with captives' name glyphs frequently inscribed on their bodies, apparently as a further insult. Second, the number of captives a Maya lord had taken personally or received from subordinate warriors could be added to his list of titles, as could statements highlighting the identities of especially important victims (Stuart 1985a). Thus the ruler Yaxuun Bahlam IV of Yaxchilan is consistently referred to in the monumental inscriptions he commissioned as *aj winik baak*, "he of twenty captives," and as *u chahn*, "the guardian of" two captives in particular (one called Aj Uk, the other's name not yet securely readable), even when the subject matter of those monuments is not explicitly militaristic (Schele and Friedel 1990: 285–95; Martin and Grube 2008: 130–31). Finally, lists of successive conquests and captures could constitute the main thrust of an inscription, as with the so-called Tablet of the Slaves at Palenque: part of this text deals with the sites "axed" (*ch'ak*) and the persons "captured" (*chuk*) by a high-ranking nobleman named Chak Suutz' (Schele 1991). This last genre of inscription is surprisingly rare, even in the Maya west, where military themes are more common in figural and textual monuments than elsewhere. Why this should be so probably has to do with the consequences for the two polities involved in a notable capture and the long-term instability of the relationships thus established.

Certainly the fate of Maya captives was unenviable. There are vivid artistic portrayals from the Classic period of torture by burning, scalping, and the mutilation of digits; this last practice, along with sacrificial heart extraction and the mass executions by beheading described in some texts as "blood is pooled, heads are piled up" (*nahbaj ch'ich', wihtzaj jolo'b*), seem to be confirmed by forensic archaeology (Miller 1986; Tiesler and Cucina 2006; Berryman 2007; Scherer and Garret 2011; see also Miller and Martin 2004; Tiesler and Cucina 2007). Yet in other cases, captives were evidently worth more to their abductors alive than dead: as David Stuart (2004) points out, a ruler of Seibal, Yich'aak Bahlam, not only survived his capture by the king of Dos Pilas in 735 CE, but actually outlived his captor by several years. The price of his life was the incorporation of Seibal into a regional Petexbatun polity ruled by the Dos Pilas king, with Yich'aak Bahlam as a no doubt grateful vassal. On the other hand, whatever ransoms or short-term concessions may have been extracted, the practical autonomy of the Palenque polity does not seem to have been substantially diminished in the long term following the capture and public display of its king, K'inich K'an Joy

Chitam, by the forces of the nearby site of Tonina in 711 CE, and his eventual return to Palenque (Stuart 2004). Gods, too, could be captured, although whether they were ever ransomed is unclear. Late Classic rulers at Tikal and Quirigua commemorated the capture of effigies of enemies' gods, which the king of the latter site caused to be broken and burned (*ch'ohmaj u te', johch'aj u k'ahk'*, "their wood is struck, their fire is drilled").

Captives, then, were valuable, and their names and abject states recorded and publicly presented because of who they were as persons: their rank and fame added luster to their captors' pride, and their political roles and family ties offered a way to coerce enemy polities into submission or to exact revenge on a hated foe. Taking captives enhanced a lord's status within his own polity, and may have been thought of at some sites as a prerequisite for rulership. Yet this emphasis on individual names and captures in the hieroglyphic corpus comes at the expense of more detailed or comprehensive discussions of Maya military history. Probably the most informative account of the strategies and political consequences of Classic Maya warfare comes from Dos Pilas, where a text carved on temple steps recounts the mid-seventh-century foundation of a dynasty at that site by one Bajlaj Chan K'awiil, the half-brother of the Tikal king Nuun U Jol Chahk, and the protracted conflict between the two factions of the Tikal royal house they led (Houston and Mathews 1985; Houston 1993; Boot 2002; Guenter 2003). By 657 CE, the ruler of Tikal's historic enemy, Calakmul, had brought both brothers forcibly under his sway, but five years later Nuun U Jol Chahk sacked Dos Pilas and forced Bajlaj Chan K'awiil into exile. The ensuing struggle dragged on for seven years, with the Dos Pilas king obliged at one point to flee the town where he had taken refuge and "go up" (*t'ab*) to another friendly site. At last, in 677, Calakmul's forces defeated Nuun U Jol Chahk, compelling him to "go out" (*lok'*) from the Petexbatun region, presumably back to Central Petén. In 679, Tikal's forces were defeated in a pivotal battle (*jubuyi u took', u pakal*, "fell the flint and shield of" the Tikal king), probably by a combined Calakmul-Dos Pilas force; captured warriors were executed *en masse*, although Nuun U Jol Chahk himself may have survived the encounter, and Bahlaj Chan K'awiil and the king of Calakmul celebrated their victory with a ritual dance (Houston 1993).

Frustratingly for modern readers, the Dos Pilas stairway leaves out what is, for us, essential background information about the story it relates. The emphasis throughout is on the deeds of Bajlaj Chan K'awiil, not his motives or goals, and certainly not on the intentions of the other players in the drama. Even the crucial battles are only sketched out: we have the names of a few important places, sites where Bajlaj Chan K'awiil took refuge, but the place of Tikal's final defeat is not mentioned at all, and we have no clear idea of the size, organization, or actual leadership of the armies involved. Bajlaj Chan K'awiil took a captive, one Taaj Mo', becoming thereafter "the guardian of Taaj Mo'," and the main prize of his final victory was a Tikal lord named Nuun Bahlam (Martin and Grube 2008: 57). Yet their captures mark the first and only time those characters feature in the story, and we are not told why they were individually important.

These kinds of lacunae illustrate the Classic Maya approach to military history, which indeed comes very close to not being military history at all. Instead, Classic texts about war are better thought of as texts about warrior kings, *res gestae* meant to tally up the personal triumphs essential to security on the throne (Inomata and Triadan 2002: 204). Wider geopolitical insights, when they appear at all, are incidental to that end, and it is a testament to the diligence of a few epigraphers that some aspects of large-scale Maya political history have been reconstructed from such person-centered texts (see, e.g., Schele and Friedel 1990; Mathews 1991; Houston 1993; Martin and Grube 2008; Stuart and Stuart 2008). The personalization of victory and defeat goes a long way towards explaining why so few captures, celebrated as they were during the lifetime of the captor, received much notice in later monuments. Classic Maya political ties were personal, and the inter-polity relationships of submission and tribute that captures could establish probably did not long outlive the persons involved. One of the few retrospective, long-term accounts of past victories, inscribed on a congeries of stone lintels at Yaxchilan in 550 CE by K'inich Tatbu Joloom(?) II, only proves this rule: it consists of a list of Yaxchilan kings going back to the dynasty's foundation, with the names of each king's most notable captive (Martin and Grube 2008: 121). There is no attempt to put those captures into a broader historical context, and the last lintel in the set, which lists the captives taken by the king who commissioned the inscriptions, makes their point clear: K'inich Tatbu Joloom(?) was a successful hunter of men and a worthy heir to his ancestors' tradition of personal glory.

Divergent multigenerational histories on the Usumacinta River

It is on the multigenerational scale that we begin to see Classic Maya ideas about history more fully elaborated, including local and politically interested perspectives on the nature and significance of events beyond living memory. This scale offered Maya historians ample scope for both cyclical and linear presentations of history. Included here are one-time events of great historical importance, which shaped the political landscape for generations to come. For example, a carved panel from Palenque, commissioned in the late seventh century and found in Temple XVII, records what was apparently the foundation of that site as a royal capital, in 490 CE, by an Early Classic king of the Baakal dynasty (Stuart and Stuart 2008). Other texts celebrate the repetition of similar events over long spans of time: an unprovenanced altar in the Dallas Museum of Art records a series of marriages between princesses of the powerful Kan dynasty and rulers of the subordinate site of La Corona which took place between the sixth and eighth centuries (Martin 2008). As with shorter-term histories, such texts were explicitly about the past but implicitly about the situations in which they were produced. We could do worse than to turn again to the Piedras Negras corpus for examples of this scale. Extending the geographical range of our study along with its temporal depth, we will consider too the alternative history adopted by the rulers of Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras' longtime rival for control of the Usumacinta River Valley region.
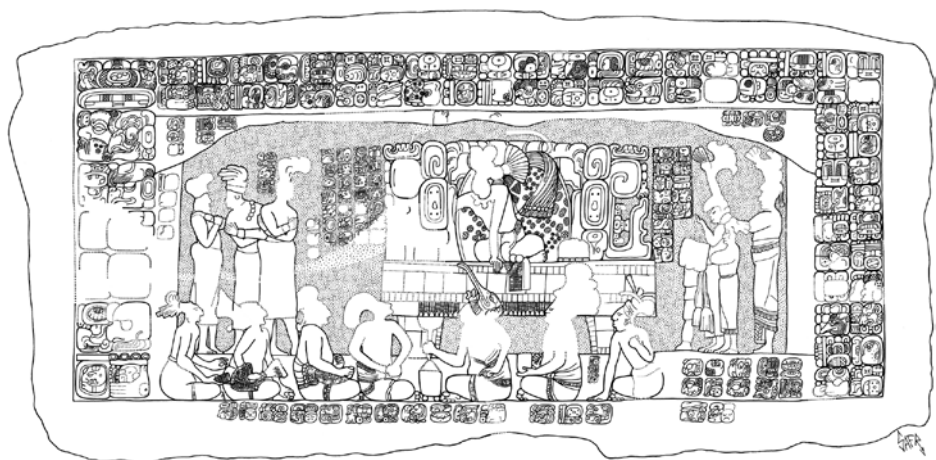
Figure 17.4 Piedras Negras Panel 3.
Drawing by Alexandre Safronov, used by permission.

One of the masterpieces of Classic Maya art, the monument now known as Piedras Negras Panel 3 (figure 17.4) presents readers with a complicated layering of remembered pasts, turned by two kings to more than one political end (Houston et al. 1998; Miller 1998: 196). Itself a historical document, Panel 3 points to nontextual ways in which the Classic Maya engaged with the past and with their ancestors, including through celebration, oratory, and ritual interaction with the dead. The panel was carved during the reign of a king ("Ruler 7") whose nominal glyphs have not yet been fully deciphered. Nevertheless, the rhetorical focus is on Ruler 7's probable grandfather, Itzam K'an Ahk IV (also known to epigraphers as "Ruler 4"), who followed K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II in rulership. While the accession of Lady Juntahn Ahk, or of a hypothetical spouse, would have been the logical culmination of her mother's life as presented in the official record, it was this Itzam K'an Ahk IV who, in the event, came to power. His parentage is poorly understood, but it is certain that his mother was someone other than Lady Winikha'b Ajaw. One possibility is that he was the son of K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II by another wife, but he could instead have been Lady Juntahn Ahk's husband, or have come to the throne by other means (Martin and Grube 2008: 147).

The text opens with the one-*k'atun* anniversary date (July 25, 749 CE) of Itzam K'an Ahk IV's accession to the throne in 729. The anniversary festivities were attended by a king of Yaxchilan whose name reads, in part, Yopaat Bahlam. Two days later, Itzam K'an Ahk performed a ceremonial "Descending Macaw" dance, then, that evening, hosted a cacao-drinking feast. The inscription goes on to record the king's death on November 24, 757, his burial three days later, and the ritual reentry and purification by fire of his tomb in 782 under the supervision of Ruler 7.

The accompanying scene, artistically among the most innovative in the Maya sculptural tradition, shows an assembly of nobles from Piedras Negras and neighboring sites: probably the cacao-drinking party mentioned in the text (Sharer and

hi a-ye   23-ji-ya JOY-ji-ya

na-NAL a-xu-(ku)   ti-AJAW-le ya-xu-ni

bi-ji u-KAB-ji-ya   BAHLAM u-KAB-ji-ya

a-MAM ya-xu-ni   ITZAM-(K'AN)-AHK 5-KIB

BAHLAM [...]-ni-ya   19-ma-MAK ha-('i)

2-KAWAK 2-MUWAAN-ni   HUL-li-ya a-[...]

u-ti ni-ya?   [...]   [...]
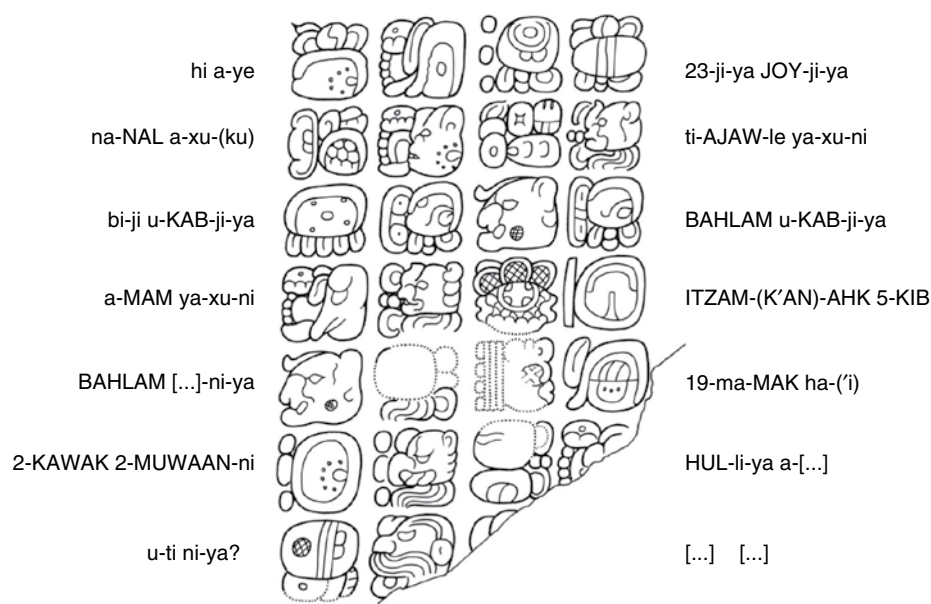
Figure 17.5 Itzam K'an Ahk's address to the Yaxchilan lords.
Drawing by Alexandre Safronov, used by permission; transliteration by the author.

Golden 2004: 39 n. 17). Itzam K'an Ahk IV is the visual focus of the scene, leaning forward from his elaborate throne to address a group of three individuals. One of these is a prince of Yaxchilan, perhaps Yopaat Bahlam's son, whose name includes the words *ahk*, "turtle," and *te'*, "tree" or "wood." The name captions of the other two are too damaged to read, but the foremost may be Yopaat Bahlam himself. Standing at the other side of the throne are the crown prince of Piedras Negras, T'ul Chiik, another noble youth, "Parrot" Chahk, and a courtier who seems to exercise some supervisory role over the two youths. Seven other nobles, all members of the Piedras Negras court, sit in a row at the king's feet, above glyphic captions giving their names and titles.

From a historical standpoint, the most interesting feature of the panel may be Itzam K'an Ahk's address to either Yopaat Bahlam or his heir (figure 17.5). Most of the text can be read phonetically and logographically, but the meanings of some crucial parts are obscure, both because of damage to the text and because it employs metaphors and verbal constructions not normally used in monumental inscriptions. Nevertheless, the speech contains some tantalizing clues about official Piedras Negras history, and is worth quoting here, phrase by phrase:

hi a ye'nal, a xukbij	This(?) is thy *ye'nal*, thy *xukbij*;
u kabjiiy a mam	thy grandfather cultivated it,
yaxuun bahlam	Yaxuun Bahlam;
[…]niiy	[*damaged past-tense verb*]
cha' kawak cha' te' muwaan	on 2 Kawak 2 Muwaan (Dec. 2, 653 CE).

uhtniiy(?) ux k'aljiiy(?)	It happened(?) 23 days after
johyajiiy ti ajawlel	he had been bound into lordship,
yaxuun bahlam	Yaxuun Bahlam;
u kabjiiy itzam k'an ahk	Itzam K'an Ahk [III] had cultivated it
[ti] ho' kib bolonlajuun [te'] mak	on 5 Kib 19 Mak (Nov. 9, 653).
haa' huliiy(?)	That one arrived here(?),
a [...]	thy [*damaged noun*]
[...]	[*two more damaged glyphs*].

Here, *ye'nal* (perhaps something like "maize kernel(s)" or "harvest") and *xukbij* (a word of uncertain meaning) form a poetic couplet, referring metaphorically to the same thing, but what that thing is – an object, a status, a relationship – is not clear. "To cultivate" (*kab*, literally "to manure") is commonly used in Classic texts to describe the supervision of some activity (Houston and Stuart, personal communication to Karl Taube in 1995, cited in Taube 2003: 464). It is in that sense that Itzam K'an Ahk III is said to have "cultivated" the accession of Yaxuun Bahlam, the grandfather of one of his interlocutors, as ruler of Yaxchilan. The implication is that Yaxuun Bahlam was a vassal of the Piedras Negras king and ruled by his consent. Yaxuun Bahlam's own "cultivation" of his descendant's activities should not be understood as direct supervision, since he was surely dead by 749, having been succeeded by Yopaat Bahlam. Rather, he could have laid the groundwork for whatever state of affairs Itzam K'an Ahk IV's cryptic opening statement implies.

Aside from the figurative language and the missing glyphs, two very curious features of the king's lecture are directly relevant to our theme. The first is how closely Itzam K'an Ahk's verbal discourse about time, at least as reported decades after the fact, mirrors written historical narratives in its temporal precision ("23 days after he had been bound into lordship") and its inclusion of complete Calendar Round dates. Whether or not Itzam K'an Ahk IV actually spoke those words, Ruler 7's scribes and carvers certainly thought he should have done so. Detailed familiarity with the past, then, may have been as important in courtly speech as it was in monumental texts, implying a high degree of historical literacy among the elite. The second remarkable thing is that Itzam K'an Ahk's speech, the main panel text, and the Yaxchilan prince's nominal caption together tell a very different story about Yaxchilan's dynastic sequence and historical relationships with Piedras Negras than does the epigraphic record from Yaxchilan itself.

None of the surviving Yaxchilan inscriptions mentions a Yopaat Bahlam ruling during the eighth century CE. His son, too, is absent from the monumental record (Josserand 2007). A Yaxuun Bahlam – the third of five kings by that name – did rule at Yaxchilan in the seventh century, but according to the Yaxchilan texts, he took office in 629, not 653; Itzam K'an Ahk I, on the other hand, did not accede to the throne of Piedras Negras unti 639. If Yaxuun Bahlam III was indeed the vassal of the first Itzam K'an Ahk, the scribes who chronicled his reign chose to consign that detail to silence. Yet the omission brings us to an important point: although kings of the sixth century had dedicated some monumental texts at

Yaxchilan, none are known to date from Yaxuun Bahlam's reign. Outside of the Piedras Negras panel, contemporary scholars know of this king only from inscriptions commissioned by his grandson, Yaxuun Bahlam IV (Grube 1998).

Yaxuun Bahlam III lived until at least 669 CE, but his date of death is unknown. His son and successor, Itzamnaaj Bahlam II, came to power in 681, but only began to commission public monuments in the 720s, when he was about sixty years old. The resumption of monumental inscriptions at Yaxchilan coincides with a period of hostility between that site and Piedras Negras, and late in his reign Itzamnaaj Bahlam seems to have consolidated control over the upper Usumacinta Valley (Martin and Grube 2008: 134–36). Following his death in 742, the monumental record at Yaxchilan again goes silent, not to be taken up until the accession, ten years later, of Yaxuun Bahlam IV, Itzamnaaj Bahlam's son by a junior wife. The texts commissioned by the new king emphasize not only his own military accomplishments, but the deeds of his royal grandfather and of his mother, Lady Uuh Chan Lem. Several of these inscriptions were carved on existing monuments whose original texts and images had been erased (Mathews 1975).

As fragmentary and circumstantial as the evidence is, it is hard to avoid suggesting that Yaxuun Bahlam IV deliberately sought to erase all official memory of Yopaat Bahlam, who may have ruled and erected monuments during the decade following the death of Itzamnaaj Bahlam II. Yopaat Bahlam could have been the son of Itzamnaaj Bahlam's principal wife, Lady K'abal Xook, who received the kind of prominence in public texts dating to Itzamnaaj Bahlam's reign that Yaxuun Bahlam IV gave to his own mother after he took the throne (Josserand 2007). In this scenario, Yaxuun Bahlam III could well have been subject to Piedras Negras for much of his reign, and perhaps we could see his "coronation" by Itzam K'an Ahk in 653 as the beginning or confirmation of his subordinate status. Itzamnaaj Bahlam II could have inherited his father's relationship with the kings of Piedras Negras, then repudiated it late in life to pursue an independent course for Yaxchilan. Tensions between the two sites may have eased under Yopaat Bahlam, then flared again with the accession of Yaxuun Bahlam IV, who subjected his predecessor to a *damnatio memoriae*. In the period that followed, history became one more front on which the rivalry between Yaxchilan and Piedras Negras played out, with radically different accounts of the past invoked in support of the geopolitical ambitions of living rulers.

Ancient ancestors and divine founders: the Preclassic period and cosmic time

The overwhelming majority of Classic Maya historical texts deal with events and people postdating the end of the Preclassic period in the third century CE. Nevertheless, a few exceptions demonstrate that Classic Maya scribes were conscious of a more distant past, and that the Classic kings invoked ancient histories in support of their contemporary interests. Despite this paucity of sources, we can observe a strikingly different approach to history in Classic references to more

ancient times. Preclassic kings are almost never presented as involved in military contests; aside from the dubious Kan "king list" vessels discussed above – which in any case emphasize succession, not descent – the emphasis is on exemplary individuals rather than on family lines. Instead, the deeds of Preclassic rulers are invoked as precedents for the acts of Classic Maya kings, legitimating their authority and establishing moral and religious obligations they are expected to fulfill. Such deeds are basically of two kinds: acts which occurred once, but which exerted a powerful influence over subsequent generations, and acts which could be repeated or imitated by later kings. The foundation of dynasties and cities are the examples par excellence of the first category; the celebration of period-ending rituals typifies the second.

This distinctive approach to Preclassic history, and the sociopolitical disjunction between the Preclassic and Classic periods which it may imply, is visible already in Early Classic texts. On Tikal Stela 31, a now-destroyed passage can be reconstructed as recording that an ancient "overlord" (*kaloomte'*), known to epigraphers as "Foliated Jaguar" and not tied in the text to a specific Maya kingdom, celebrated a half-*k'atun* ending on 8.7.10.0.0 7 Ajaw 3 Wo, or July 12, 189 CE.[3] The ruler who commissioned the stela, Sihyaj Chan K'awiil, invoked this period-ending ceremony along with a more recent one (celebrated by the Tikal ruler Unen Bahlam on 8.14.0.0.0 7 Ajaw 3 Xul, or August 29, 317) in order to demonstrate that he had piously observed the same rituals as his forebears when he "set in order" and "cultivated" the 9.0.10.0.0 half-*k'atun* ending on 7 Ajaw 3 Yax, or October 16, 445. Clearly the preference in these passages for period endings falling on 7 Ajaw suggests that Sihyaj Chan K'awiil's half-*k'atun* celebration was not just a recapitulation but in some sense a reoccurrence of those earlier ceremonies. Yet Sihyaj Chan K'awiil must have been constrained to use that rhetorical strategy, in preference to other ways of invoking the past, because of the history of his own family: his father, Yax Nuun Ahiin, was probably the son of the ruler of Teotihuacan in Central Mexico, one "Spearthrower Owl." Acting on behalf of that king, a military leader named Sihyaj K'ahk' apparently traveled to the Central Petén, accepted the submission of a number of local kings, and deposed the reigning king of Tikal in favor of the child Yax Nuun Ahiin (Stuart 2000). While the text and iconography of the monument make Sihyaj Chan K'awiil's Teotihuacano connections clear, establishing his legitimacy as a Maya king required that he embrace ancient precedent and situate himself in a historical context that made his rule seem natural and inevitable.

The ideological importance of Preclassic antiquity did not diminish in the Late Classic period, even as political legitimacy tended to derive from more recent sources. In 736 CE, the Palenque ruler K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb dedicated a limestone panel invoking Late Classic, Early Classic, and Preclassic ancestors. The panel depicts K'inich Janab Pakal, K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb's grandfather and easily the site's most important Late Classic king, presiding over a ceremony in which K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb and his younger brother, U Pakal K'inich Janab Pakal, sacrificed blood from their genitals (González Cruz and Bernal Romero 2004; Stuart 2005:
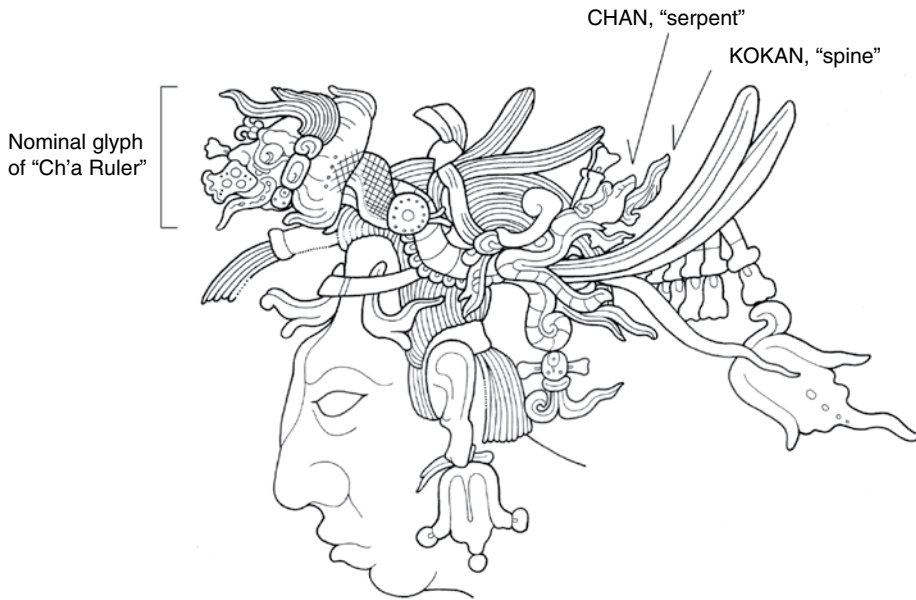
Figure 17.6 Detail of the carved bench panel from Temple XXI at Palenque, showing the nominal glyphs of the "Ch'a Ruler" and U Kokan Chan in K'inich Janab Pakal's headdress. Drawing by the author after a photograph by Jorge Pérez de Lara.

40, 187; Carter 2010). The aspect of the history the panel presents is biographical, not different in kind from the monuments of Lady Winikha'b Ajaw, but the full story spans nearly two millennia.

Like most monumental texts, the inscription refers to its own dedication, in this case as part of the shrine – the "Resplendent Owl House," now known more prosaically as Temple XXI – in which it was housed. It looks back to another, Late Preclassic, dedication event, when an earlier king in the Palenque dynasty is supposed to have built the first shrines for the city's patron gods in 252 BCE. How this account squares with the claim from the Temple XVII panel, that the site of Palenque itself was founded in 490 CE, is ambiguous; perhaps the royal house traced its lineage back to another site. The Late Preclassic king apparently had a namesake in an Early Classic ruler, the predecessor of the "founder," Buhtz'aj Sak Chiik. Known to epigraphers as the "Ch'a Ruler" because his full name cannot yet be read, the later ruler was born in 422 CE and took office at the age of 13. On the Temple XXI panel, K'inich Janab Pakal is shown wearing in his headdress the nominal glyph shared by both kings, along with that of the semi-mythical ruler U Kokan Chan (figure 17.6). Elsewhere at Palenque, this individual is said to have been born in 1012 BCE, during the Middle Preclassic period, and long before the city of Palenque or its ruling house existed. Maya lords could ritually manifest or impersonate gods and ancestors (Houston and Stuart 1996), and a caption indicates that K'inich Janab Pakal is impersonating "the famous 'Ch'a Ruler' and U Kokan Chan" (figure 17.7). The "Ch'a Ruler" in question is probably the Late Preclassic king whose memory the
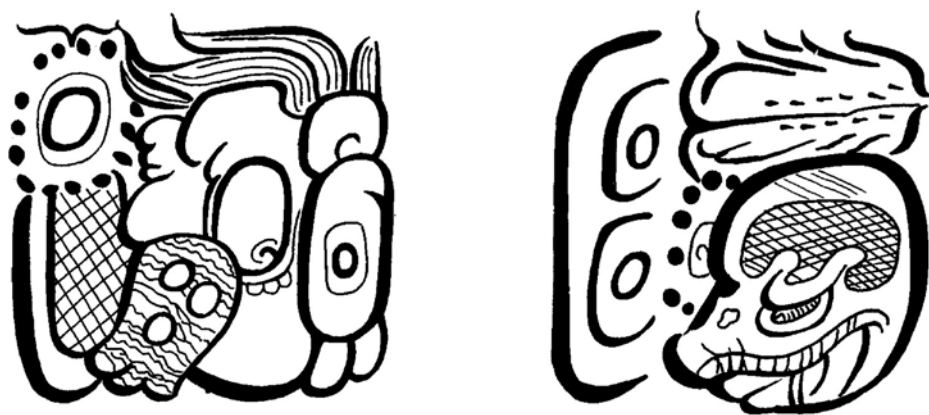
Figure 17.7 Nominal glyphs of the "Ch'a Ruler" and U Kokan Chan from the accompanying caption.
Drawing by the author after a photograph by Jorge Pérez de Lara.

inscription recalls. The Temple XXI panel thus conflates three great kings – one from living memory, one plausibly historical, and one quasihistorical at best – in the person of a single ruler (González Cruz and Bernal Romero 2004; Stuart 2005: 189).

Inscriptions dealing with events in "deep" or "cosmic" time – from tens of thousands to millions of years before their composition – clearly take us out of the realm of what we would think of as history, and into that of mythology. Yet Maya scribes fixed such stories in the same chronological framework, precise to the day, as the lives and acts of living kings, and there is nothing to indicate that any conceptual, as opposed to temporal, distinction existed between "mythical" and "historical" pasts. Of course the characters in narratives of deep time tend to be supernatural and to engage in activities – self-decapitation, battles with cosmic monsters – impossible for ordinary human beings. Even those deeds, however, set precedents for mortal kings to follow in more practical ways, and more than one Maya deity is credited with the foundation of a dynasty. Stuart (2005) has comprehensively explored the connections between human and divine pasts set out on a pair of bench panels from Temple XIX at Palenque, commissioned like their counterpart in Temple XXI by K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb. In part through the repeated use of the *tzolk'in* date 9 Ik' ("Wind"), the inscriptions connect the coronation of one of Palenque's patron gods before the beginning of the current *piktun*, his subsequent defeat of a monstrous alligator, the manifestation of the divine patrons in the present era, and the accession of K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb (Stuart 2005).

Rather than accepting a universal version of the mythic past, it appears likely that each major polity had its own tradition linking gods and ancient heroes to its ruling dynasty. An inscribed altar from Naranjo (Graham 1978; Grube and Schele 1993), commissioned at the end of the sixth century by a ruler whom epigraphers call Aj Wosal (Martin and Grube 2008: 71), presents a local vision of the very distant past. The second half of this rather unusual text dwells on Aj Wosal's completion of

three *k'atun*-ending rituals and on his dedication of a shrine at a place called Maxam, within the territory of Naranjo (Reents-Budet 1994: 50). This dedicatory act, accompanied by the sacrificial beheading of captives, is tied in the preceding passages to the conjuration (*tzak*) of a deity which took place at Maxam in 258 BCE, in deep but nevertheless plausibly "historical" antiquity. Such conjuration events are linked in other texts to sacrificial bloodletting and perhaps to ecstatic visions. Precisely what the participants experienced subjectively is uncertain, but the divine presence seems to have been regarded as in some way immanent (see Schele and Miller 1986; Taube 1998). The ancient conjuration in some way presages the dedication of the shrine, but the precise connection is unclear. The link between sacral and regal power in the Late Classic periods and the primeval past is much more explicit. The altar inscription opens with the accession to rulership of a god – his name is not yet fully deciphered – more than two *piktuns* before the current era. That accession must have been to the rulership of Naranjo or its royal lineage, since a later passage calls Aj Wosal "the 35th successor of" his divine predecessor. Such numeric precision implies that the Late Classic kings of Naranjo not only laid claim to supernatural ancestry, but that they possessed documentary, "historical" records of the early successors to the god who founded their line.

Conclusions

The dramatic bias in artifactual preservation towards inscriptions on durable materials must strongly shape our picture of what Classic Maya historical writing involved. The available evidence suggests that this genre was characterized by a concern with temporal specificity, by a focus on the genealogy as well as the ritual and military acts of kings, and by a deference to authority which exhibits itself both in the style and in the content of the texts. The ancient Maya historical system was tied together by two complementary systems of temporal reckoning – one cyclical, the other linear – in which precision to the day was inherent, a fact perhaps best explained by the divinatory uses of the 260-day almanac. Statements about the past are presented as simple facts, not attributed to witnesses or other sources, and the royal subjects of Classic history are presented either in a flattering light or (as with Yopaat Bahlam under the reign of Yaxuun Bahlam IV) not at all. Ancestral status conferred authority: rather than denouncing a hated predecessor, the safest course was to efface his monuments and, in subsequent inscriptions, to carry on as though he had never existed. By contrast, Maya historians dwelt on the successes and especially the piety of the venerated dead. The most ancient royal ancestors, as well as the gods who sometimes preceded them in kingship, served as models for the lords of the Classic era, who invoked the examples of their ritual acts in order to legitimate their own rule.

Not only the content of Maya historical documents but also the practice of their production were embedded in the sociopolitical structures which the independent Lowland polities had in common. Two determining structural factors suggest

themselves: the relative autonomy of each of the most powerful polities from every other and – until the breakdown of the Classic state system during the ninth and tenth centuries CE – the unrivaled political authority, economic power, and cultural magnetism of the major royal courts. Classic Maya kingdoms may not have been large enough to support an educated nobility with sufficient leisure time left over from the administrative and military requirements of the state to write and read history for its own sake. Nor were the kinds of critical investigations into the characters and motives of past actors that we expect to see in a historical work consistent with the emphasis on ancestor veneration which underlay the authority of the Classic kings. Within each Classic Maya state, there were probably no alternative sources of power, whether religious or kin-based, which could offer havens for the growth of a critical historical tradition capable of threatening that authority. When a powerful center extended its influence over a region, it was more likely for the central court to control the production of texts at subordinate sites than for their vassals to patronize autonomous scribal "schools" (see Golden et al. 2008, for the example of Yaxchilán and its secondary sites). Nevertheless, the importance that writing about the past clearly had in Classic Maya society, politics, and religion, and the consistency with which its rhetorical and structural conventions were applied over generations, leave us no alternative but to concede to those accounts of the past the status of a genuine historical tradition.[4]

Notes

1   For reasons connected to the history of Maya epigraphic and calendrical studies, it is common scholarly practice to use the Colonial Yucatec names for days, months, and larger units of time in the Maya calendar, even though the Classic Maya names would in many cases have been different. The present work uses a standard epigraphic orthography for all Mayan languages in which most letters have roughly the phonetic value that they would in Spanish, with the following qualifications: *h* represents a "soft" sound like English *h*, while *j* is a "hard *h*" like Spanish *j* or German *ch*; *b* is almost implosive; *x* represents a sound like English *sh*, as it does in Portuguese; ' after a vowel represents a glottal stop, like the *tt* in Cockney English *bottle*; and the "glottalized" consonants *p'*, *k'*, *t'*, *ch'*, and *tz'* represent emphatic versions of their "unglottalized" counterparts *p*, *k*, *t*, *ch*, and *tz*. Vowels may be "short" (e.g. *a*, *e*, *i*), or they may be "long" (*aa*), "glottalized" (*e'*), or "aspirated" (*ih*). See Houston et al. 2004; Robertson et al. 2007).

2   On these controversies, see, for example, Marcus 1976a, 1993; Demarest 1992; Martin and Grube 1994, 1995; Chase and Chase 1996; Houston 1993; Lucero 1999.

3   Only the ruler's name, his title, and the verbal phrase ("he set it in order, he cultivated it") survive, but the structure of the passage parallels the two other accounts of period endings falling on 7 Ajaw – the former observed by Sihyaj Chan K'awiil, the latter by Unen Bahlam – which come directly before and after it in the stela text.

4   The author wishes to thank Kurt Raaflaub for his kind invitation to contribute to this volume. He would also like to thank his former and current graduate advisors, Prof. David Stuart (University of Texas) and Prof. Stephen Houston (Brown University) for their unflagging support, for their advice on certain thorny issues of Classic Maya history,

and not least for having deciphered so much of the script that records that history. Prof. Alexandre Safronov generously agreed to the publication of his drawing of Piedras Negras Panel 3 (figure 17.4), and Justin Kerr's archive of rollout photographs of Maya vessels (www.mayavase.org [accessed July 2013]) has been an invaluable epigraphic and art historical resource. Dr. Thomas Garrison and Katharine Lukach prepared the map which may help readers to make some spatial sense out of all this history (figure 17.1). Special thanks are due to Ms. Lukach, the author's valued colleague and beloved wife, for her advice, proofreading, and support.

References

Berryman, C.A. 2007. "Captive Sacrifice and Trophy Taking among the Ancient Maya: An Evaluation of its Bioarchaeological Evidence and its Sociopolitical Implications." In R.J. Chacon and D.H. Dye (eds.), *The Taking and Displaying of Human Body Parts as Trophies by Amerindians*, 377–99. New York.

Boot, E. 2002. "The Life and Times of B'ahlah Chan K'awil of Mutal (Dos Pilas), according to Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2." Mesoweb. www.mesoweb.com/features/boot/DPLHS2.pdf [accessed July 2013].

Carrasco Vargas, R., and M. Colón González. 2005. "El Reino de Kaan y la Antigua Ciudad Maya de Calakmul." *Arqueología Mexicana* XIII no. 75: 40–47.

Carrasco Vargas, R., V.A. Vázquez López, and S. Martin. 2009. "Daily Life of the Ancient Maya Recorded on Murals at Calakmul, Mexico." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 106 no. 46: 19245–49.

Carter, N.P. 2010. "Carved Platform Panel, A.D. 736." In D. Finamore and S.D. Houston (eds.), *The Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*. New Haven.

Chase, A.F., and D.Z. Chase. 1996. "More than Kin and King: Centralized Political Organization among the Late Classic Maya." *Current Anthropology* 37: 803–10.

Chi, G.A. 1582 (2008). "Relación de Algunas Costumbres." Excerpted in Houston et al. 2008: 38.

Christenson, A.J. 2007. *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Maya*. Norman, OK.

Coe, M.D. 1992. *Breaking the Maya Code*. London.

Coe, M.D., and J. Kerr. 1998. *The Art of the Maya Scribe*. New York.

de Alpuche, G.D. 1579 (2008). "Relación de Dzonot." Excerpted in Houston et al. 2008: 38.

de Cogolludo, D.L. 1688. *Historia de Yucathan*. Madrid.

de Landa, D. 1978. *Yucatan Before and After the Conquest*. Ed. and trans. W. Gates. New York.

Demarest, A.A. 1992. "Ideology in Ancient Maya Cultural Evolution: The Dynamics of Galactic Polities." In Demarest and G.W. Conrad (eds.), *Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilizations*, 135–57. Santa Fé, NM.

Demarest, A.A. 2004. "After the Maelstrom: Collapse of the Classic Maya Kingdoms and the Terminal Classic in Western Petén." In Demarest et al. 2004: 102–24.

Demarest, A.A., P.M. Rice, and D.S. Rice (eds.). 2004. *The Terminal Classic in the Maya Lowlands: Collapse, Transition, and Transformation*. Boulder, CO.

de Palomar, M. 1579 (2008). "Relación de la Ciudad de Mérida." Excerpted in Houston et al. 2008: 36.

de Zorita, A. 1963. *Life and Labor in Ancient Mexico: The Brief and Summary Relation of the Lords of New Spain*. Trans. B. Keen. Norman, OK.

Fox, J.W. 1987. *Maya Postclassic State Formation*. Cambridge.

Gates, W. 1978. "Introduction." In de Landa 1978: i–xv. New York.

Golden, C.W. 2003. "The Politics of Warfare in the Usumacinta Basin: La Pasadita and the Realm of Bird Jaguar." In T.W. Stanton and M.K. Brown (eds.), *Ancient Mesoamerican Warfare*, 31–48. Walnut Creek, CA.

Golden, C.W, A.K. Scherer, A.R. Muñoz, and R. Vasquez. 2008. "Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan: Divergent Political Trajectories in Adjacent Maya Polities." *Latin American Antiquity* 19.3: 249–74.

González Cruz, A., and G. Bernal Romero. 2004. "The Throne Panel of Temple 21 at Palenque." In Miller and Martin 2004: 264–67.

Graham, I. 1978. *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions*, II pt. 2. Cambridge, MA.

Grube, N. 1998. "Observations on the Late Classic Interregnum at Yaxchilán." In W. Bray and L. Manzanilla (eds.), *The Archaeology of Mesoamerica* 116–27. London.

Grube, N., and L. Schele. 1993. *Naranjo Altar 1 and Rituals of Death and Burials*. Austin.

Guenter, S.P. 2003. *The Inscriptions of Dos Pilas Associated with B'ajlaj Chan K'awiil*. Mesoweb. www.mesoweb.com/features/guenter/DosPilas.pdf [accessed July 2013].

Hammond, N. 2000. "The Maya Lowlands: Pioneer Farmers to Merchant Princes." In *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, II: *Mesoamerica*, pt. 1: 197–249. New York and Cambridge.

Hansen, R.D., S. Bozarth, J. Jacob, et al. 2002. "Climatic and Environmental Variability in the Rise of Maya Civilization." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 13: 273–95.

Houston, S.D. 1983. "Warfare between Naranjo and Ucanal." In Houston (ed.), *Contributions to Maya Hieroglyphic Decipherment*, 1: 31–39. New Haven.

Houston, S.D. 1987. *The Inscriptions and Monumental Art of Dos Pilas, Guatemala: A Study of Classic Maya History and Politics*. Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University.

Houston, S.D. 1993. *Hieroglyphs and History at Dos Pilas: Dynastic Politics of the Classical Maya*. Austin.

Houston, S.D. (ed.). 1998. *Function and Meaning in Classic Maya Architecture*. Washington, DC.

Houston, S.D. 2000. "Into the Minds of Ancients: Advances in Maya Glyph Studies." *Journal of World Prehistory* 14.2: 121–201.

Houston, S.D. 2004. "Writing in Early Mesoamerica." In Houston (ed.), *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, 274–309. New York and Cambridge.

Houston, S.D. 2009. "A Splendid Predicament: Young Men in Classic Maya Society." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 19: 149–78.

Houston, S.D, H. Escobedo, D. Forsyth, et al. 1998. "On the River of Ruins: Explorations at Piedras Negras, Guatemala, 1997." *Mexicon* 20: 16–21.

Houston, S.D., and T. Inomata. 2009. *The Classic Maya*. New York and Cambridge.

Houston, S.D., and P. Mathews. 1985. *The Dynastic Sequence of Dos Pilas, Guatemala*. San Francisco.

Houston, S.D., J.S. Robertson, and D. Stuart. 2000. "The Language of Classic Maya Inscriptions." *Current Anthropology* 41.3: 321–56.

Houston, S.D., and D. Stuart. 1992. "On Maya Hieroglyphic Literacy." *Current Anthropology* 33.5: 589–93.

Houston, S.D., and D. Stuart. 1996. "Of Gods, Glyphs, and Kings: Divinity and Rulership among the Classic Maya." *Antiquity*, June 1996: 289–312.

Houston, S.D., and D. Stuart. 2001. "Peopling the Classic Maya Court." In S.D. Houston and T. Inomata (eds.), *Royal Courts of the Ancient Maya*, I: *Theory, Comparison, and Synthesis*, 54–83. Boulder, CO.

Houston, S.D., D. Stuart, and O. Chinchilla Mazariegos (eds.). 2008. *The Decipherment of Ancient Maya Writing*. Norman, OK.

Houston, S.D., D. Stuart, and J.S. Robertson. 2004. "Disharmony in Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Linguistic Change and Continuity in Classic Society." In S. Wichmann (ed.), *The Linguistics of Maya Writing*, 83–101. Salt Lake City.

Houston, S.D., D. Stuart, and K. Taube. 2006. *The Memory of Bones: Body, Being and Experience among the Classic Maya*. Austin.

Inomata, T, and D. Triadan. 2002. "El espectáculo de la muerta en las Tierras Bajas Mayas." In A. Ciudad Ruíz, M.H. Ruz Sosa, and J. Iglesias Ponce de León (eds.), *Antropología de la Eternidad*, 195–207. Madrid.

Jones, C. 1987. "The Life and Times of Ah Cacau, Ruler of Tikal." In *Primer Simposio Mundial sobre Epigrafía Maya*, 107–20. Guatemala.

Josserand, J.K. 2007. "The Missing Heir at Yaxchilan: Literary Analysis of a Maya Historical Puzzle." *Latin American Antiquity* 18.3: 295–312.

López Medel, T. 1565 (2008). "Tratado cuyo título es 'De los tres elementos, aire, agua y tierra,' en que se trata de las cosas que en cada uno de ellos, acerca de los Occidentales Indias, naturaleza engendra y produce comunes con las de acá, y particularmente de aquel Nuevo Mundo." Excerpted in Houston et al. 2008: 28.

Lucero, L.J. 1999. "Classic Lowland Maya Political Organization: A Review." *Journal of World Prehistory* 13.2: 211–63.

Marcus, J. 1976a. *Emblem and State in the Classic Maya Lowlands: An Epigraphic Approach to Territorial Organization*. Washington, DC.

Marcus, J. 1976b. "The Origins of Mesoamerican Writing." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 5: 35–67.

Marcus, J. 1992. *Mesoamerican Writing Systems: Propaganda, Myth, and History in Four Ancient Civilizations*. Princeton.

Marcus, J. 1993. "Ancient Maya Political Organization." In J.A. Sabloff and J.S. Henderson (eds.), *Lowland Maya Civilization in the Eighth Century A.D.*, 111–83. Washington, DC.

Marhenke, R. 2003. *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: The Ancient Maya Codices*. www.famsi.org/mayawriting/codices/marhenke.html [accessed July 2013].

Martin, S. 1997. "The Painted King List: A Commentary on Codex-Style Dynastic Vases." In J. Kerr, *The Maya Vase Book*, V: *A Corpus of Roll-Out Photographs*, 846–63. New York.

Martin, S. 2001. "Under a Deadly Star: Warfare among the Classic Maya." In N. Grube, E. Eggebrecht, and M. Seidel (eds.), *Maya: Divine Kings of the Rain Forest* 175–85. Cologne.

Martin, S. 2005. "Of Snakes and Bats: Shifting Identities at Calakmul." *The PARI Journal* 6.2: 5–15.

Martin, S. 2008. "Wives and Daughters on the Dallas Altar." Mesoweb. www.mesoweb.com/articles/martin/Wives&Daughters.pdf [accessed July 2013].

Martin, S., and N. Grube. 1994. "Evidence for Macro-Political Organization amongst Classic Maya Lowland States." Mesoweb. www.mesoweb.com/articles/martin/Macro-Politics.pdf [accessed July 2013]

Martin, S., and N. Grube. 1995. "Maya Superstates." *Archaeology* 48.6: 41–46.

Martin, S., and N. Grube. 2008. *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens*. 2nd edn. New York.

Masson, M.A., T.S. Hare, and C. Peraza Lope. 2006. "Postclassic Maya Society Regenerated at Mayapán." In G.M. Schwartz and J.J. Nichols (eds.), *After Collapse: The Regeneration of Complex Societies*, 188–207. Tucson, AZ.

Mathews, P. 1975. *La Escultura de Yaxchilán*. Mexico City.

Mathews, P. 1991. "Classic Maya Emblem Glyphs." In T.P. Culbert (ed.), *Classic Maya Political History: Hieroglyphic and Archaeological Evidence*, 19–29. Cambridge.

Means, P.A. 1917. *History of the Spanish Conquest of Yucatan and of the Itzas*. Cambridge, MA.

Miller, M.E. 1986. *The Murals of Bonampak*. Princeton.

Miller, M.E. 1998. "A Design for Meaning in Maya Architecture." In Houston 1998: 187–222.

Miller, M.E., and S. Martin (eds.). 2004. *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya*. Washington, DC.

Morley, S.G. 1915. *An Introduction to the Study of Maya Hieroglyphs*. Washington, DC.

Pendergast, D. 1986. "Stability through Change: Lamanai, Belize, from the Ninth to the Seventeenth Century." In J.A. Sabloff and E.W. Andrews V (eds.), *Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic*, 223–449. Albuquerque.

Proskouriakoff, T. 1960. "Historical Implications of a Pattern of Dates at Piedras Negras, Guatemala." *American Antiquity* 25.4: 454–75.

Reents-Budet, D. 1994. *Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period*. Durham, NC.

Rice, D.S., P.M. Rice, and T.W. Pugh. 1998. "Settlement Continuity and Change in the Central Petén Lakes Region: The Case of Zacpetén." In A. Ciudad Ruíz, Y. Fernández Marquínez, J.M. García Campillo, et al. (eds.), *Anatomía de una civilización: aproximaciones interdisciplinarias a la cultura maya*, 208–52. Madrid.

Rice, P.M., and D.S. Rice. 2004. "The Terminal Classic and the 'Classic Maya Collapse' in Perspective." In Demarest et al. 2004: 1–11.

Robertson, J.S., S.D. Houston, M.U. Zender, and D. Stuart. 2007. *Universals and the Logic of the Material Implication: A Case Study from Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*. Austin. http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/17718/RRAMW62. pdf?sequence=2 [accessed July 2013].

Ruz Lhuillier, A. 1977. "Gerontocracy at Palenque?" In N. Hammond (ed.), *Social Process in Maya Prehistory: Studies in Honor of Sir J. Eric S. Thompson*, 287–95. London.

Schele, L. 1991. "The Demotion of Chak-Zutz': Lineage Compounds and Subsidiary Lords." In M.G. Robertson and V. Fields (eds.), *Sixth Palenque Round Table, 1986*, 6–11. Norman, OK.

Schele, L., and D. Friedel. 1990. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York.

Schele, L., and M.E. Miller. 1986. *The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art*. New York.

Scherer, A.K., and C. Garret. 2011. "Osteología del Complejo El Diablo: Escondites y Entierro 19." In J.L. Garrido López, S.D. Houston, and E. Román (eds.), *Proyecto Arqueológico "El Zotz" Informe No. 5, Temporada 2010*, 425–58. Report submitted to the Instituto de Antropología e Historia de Guatemala. Guatemala City.

Scholes, F.V. 1952. "Franciscan Missionary Scholars in Colonial Central America." *The Americas* 8.4: 391–416.

Sharer, R.J., and C. Golden. 2004. "Kingship and Polity: Conceptualizing the Maya Body Politic." In Golden and G. Borgstede (eds.), *Continuities and Changes in Maya Archaeology: Perspectives at the Millennium*. London.

Sharer, R.J., and L.P. Traxler. 2006. *The Ancient Maya*. 6th edn. Stanford.

Stuart, D. 1985a. "The 'Count of Captives' Epithet in Classic Maya Writing." In V.M. Fields (ed.), *Fifth Palenque Round Table, 1983*, 97–101. San Francisco.

Stuart, D. 1985b. "Inscription on Four Shell Plaques from Piedras Negras, Guatemala." In E.P. Benson (ed.), *Fourth Palenque Round Table, 1980*, 175–83. San Francisco.

Stuart, D. 1998. "'The Fire Enters His House': Architecture and Ritual in Classic Maya Texts." In Houston 1998: 373–426.

Stuart, D. 2000. "'The Arrival of Strangers': Teotihuacan and Tollan in Classic Maya History." In D. Carrasco, L. Jones, and S. Sessions (eds.), *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage: From Teotihuacan to the Aztecs*, 465–513. Boulder, CO.

Stuart, D. 2004. "Longer Live the King: The Questionable Demise of K'inich K'an Joy Chitam of Palenque." *PARI Journal* 4.1: 1–4.

Stuart, D. 2005. *The Inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque: A Commentary.* San Francisco.

Stuart, D. 2011. *The Order of Days: The Maya World and the Truth about 2012.* New York.

Stuart, D., and S.D. Houston. 1994. *Classic Maya Place Names.* Washington, DC.

Stuart, D., and G. Stuart. 2008. *Palenque: Eternal City of the Maya.* New York.

Taube, K. 1998. "The Jade Hearth: Centrality, Rulership, and the Classic Maya Temple." In Houston 1998: 427–78.

Taube, K. 2003. "Ancient and Contemporary Maya Conceptions about Field and Forest." In A. Gómez-Pompa, M.F. Allen, S.L. Fedick, and J.J. Jiménez-Osomio (eds.), *The Lowland Maya Area: Three Millennia at the Human-Wildland Interface*, 461–92. Binghampton, NY.

Thompson, J.E.S. 1950. *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: An Introduction.* Washington, DC.

Tiesler, V., and A. Cucina (eds.). 2004. *Janaab' Pakal de Palenque: Vida y Muerte de un Gobernante Maya.* Mexico City.

Tiesler, V., and A. Cucina. 2006. "Procedures in Human Heart Extraction and Ritual Meaning: A Taphonomic Assessment of Anthropogenic Marks in Classic Maya Skeletons." *Latin American Antiquity* 17.4: 493–510.

Tiesler, V., and A. Cucina (eds.). 2007. *New Perspectives on Human Sacrifice and Ritual Body Treatments in Ancient Maya Society.* New York.

Warren, K.B. 1989. *The Symbolism of Subordination: Indian Identity in a Guatemalan Town.* 2nd edn. Austin.

18

The Poetics and Politics of Aztec History

Lori Boornazian Diel

Never will it be lost, never will it be forgotten,
that which they came to do,
that which they came to record in their paintings:
their renown, their history, their memory.
Thus in the future
Never will it perish, never will it be forgotten.
(*Cronica Mexicayotl*, circa 1600)

The Aztecs conceived of history as both the past and a lasting record of that past, in their case recorded in books using a pictorial system of writing. The patrons of these books were Aztec leaders, both of major and minor cities within the empire. Because of their association with the ruling elite, Aztec histories were largely constructed as political arguments, tools of persuasion that could be manipulated to argue for power and status. The Aztecs did not record their histories with the aim of fixing or standardizing historical traditions. Instead, the past was flexible, amenable to modification, interpretation, and glorification, both permitted and enhanced by a pictorial writing system. Based on the quote above, the purpose of the paintings was not only to record history but also "renown," and the elegantly constructed nature of these histories suggests that for the Aztecs the more polished one's history, the stronger its political argument, the greater a city's reputation. The past, then, was given poetic form and order to explain and legitimate the present. Moreover, such elegantly constructed histories were not just associated

with the imperial capital. Secondary cities within the empire also manipulated their histories to argue for their own prestige and identity. For Aztec imperial leaders, histories were used to justify their superior position, while for Aztec subject cities, histories were used to maintain their identities and negotiate better positions under imperial rule. For both, history was political and partisan.

The Aztec Empire

The Aztec empire is also sometimes called the Triple Alliance because it was a confederation of three city-states located in central Mexico: Tenochtitlan, capital of the Mexica people; Texcoco, associated with the Acolhua domain; and Tacuba, home of the Tepanec people (Carrasco 1999). The empire was short-lived, established in 1428 with the defeat by the Mexica and their allies of a city called Azcapotzalco, the leading power in the Valley of Mexico at the time, and then destroyed in 1521 with the Spanish defeat of Tenochtitlan. Though generally used to refer to those polities subsumed within the empire and the associated cultural traditions typical of these peoples, the term "Aztec" implies that the people of this empire viewed themselves as a unified whole, but this was not the case nor did the people refer to themselves as "Aztecs" (Barlow 1945; Smith and Berdan 1996: 4). In fact, the empire encompassed a range of city-states of different ranks, ethnicities, loyalties, and histories. It was also multilingual, with the Nahuatl language functioning largely as a lingua franca throughout the empire.

Though ostensibly a confederation of three city-states, the Aztec empire was clearly controlled by Tenochtitlan, and traditionally Texcoco is accepted as its principal ally and second in command, with Tacuba ranked third. Over fifty smaller city-states were then subject to one of the three primary cities within the empire. Each of these secondary cities, called *altepetl* in the Nahuatl language, had its own constituent parts or communities, which were called *calpulli*, and they were bound together by their shared obligations to their *altepetl*, which were then bound together again by their own obligations to the larger city-state, or *huey altepetl* – either Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, or Tacuba. The secondary *altepetl* were consolidated into the empire through an elite interaction network (Hodge 1996). That is, upon a subject city's incorporation into the empire, its local leader was typically kept in power and acted as a link between his subjects and the imperial administrative system. Membership in this imperial network had its privileges, such as gifts and access to land; these guaranteed the loyalty of the local leader and accordingly the promotion of his community's membership in the network, which was often done through historical records.

The *altepetl* continued to be fundamental to Nahua life after the conquest because the Spaniards effectively grafted a feudal system onto the Aztec imperial structure. Fundamental to the economic and political organization of New Spain was the Spanish institution called *cabecera*. The Spaniards ranked those secondary *altepetl* with hereditary rulers, called *tlatoque* (or *tlatoani*, singular) by the Nahuas,

as *cabeceras*, or headtowns, and their remaining *calpulli* were designated as *sujetos*, or subjects, and as such provided tribute, labor, and other obligations to the *cabecera*, which in turn passed these obligations on to the Spanish state. The presence of a preconquest *tlatoani* was one of the earliest criteria for the establishment of *cabecera* status, and the *tlatoani* signified a direct link to the preconquest noble ruling line (Gibson 1964: 34). Spain's control over central Mexico, then, was also maintained through the Aztecs' elite interaction network, with the Spaniards effectively replacing the Triple Alliance cities as the new imperial rulers.

The transformation of Aztec society under Spanish rule is significant because no histories from the preconquest period survive. Indeed, the Spaniards must have understood the significance of history for the Aztec peoples because they targeted the Aztec royal archives, burning the history books that were housed inside. So successful were they that all known historical manuscripts from the Aztec domain were created after the conquest. Some historians continued to use the Aztec pictorial writing system while others learned alphabetic writing and recorded their histories alphabetically in Nahuatl and/or Spanish. These histories were based on preconquest historical traditions and may even have been copied from preconquest sources, but they were clearly modified with colonial intentions. Any consideration of Aztec history must therefore contend with the dearth of preconquest materials and an understanding of changes that Aztec society, and their associated histories, would have undergone under Spanish rule. In the first century after the conquest, Aztec city-states were far from stable, and both major and minor cities maintained traditional painted histories to document and argue for their rights and privileges in the new colonial system (Gibson 1964: 50–57; Boone 1998). These rights were typically traced back to the historical past, making Aztec histories key political tools in the years following the conquest and, based on their preconquest precedents, these histories surely served this same role in the years preceding the Spanish invasion.

The Purpose of History for the Aztecs

The Nahua conception of history clearly differs from the more idealized view of history as an objective, or "true," record of past events (Boone 2000: 15). Aztec histories were more obvious political constructions, with past events reinterpreted and reconfigured to fit contemporary circumstances. The writing and interpreting of history, then, were acts of political persuasion. For example, after the Mexica ruler Itzcoatl defeated the powerful city of Azcapotzalco and established the Aztec empire, he was said to have burned the old histories and commissioned new ones, presumably to fit the new political landscape brought about by his victory (Sahagún 1959–1982: X, 191). In effect, this new, official Mexica history legitimized Tenochtitlan's superior place in the empire (León-Portilla 1986: 119). The histories from Tenochtitlan's principal ally, Texcoco, also reveal manipulations that argue for a prestigious place for this city within the empire; these histories essentially present

Texcoco as the cultural capital of the Aztec empire and heavily exalt the deeds of its former rulers, so much so that only recently have some questioned the heroic status of its famous ruler Nezahualcoyotl (Lee 2008). Some form of "micropatriotism" is evident in the histories of even the most minor Aztec cities. For instance, the Nahua historian known simply as Chimalpahin left a large number of alphabetic histories of the Aztec empire, and these clearly served to glorify his hometown, Amaquemecan Chalco (Schroeder 1991). Moreover, the pictorial *Tira de Tepechpan* records an illustrious history for Tepechpan, picturing it as the second most powerful city-state within the empire when in actuality it was clearly a minor entity (Diel 2008).

The biases inherent in Aztec histories frustrated Spanish chroniclers in their attempts to write a definitive account of the Aztec past. Hence, the Spanish friar Diego Durán (1994: 465), writing in the later sixteenth century, wondered why an indigenous history he had consulted had almost completely ignored Tacuba, presumably the third most important city in the Aztec empire. As he put it, "I am sure that if I went to Tacuba to ask about their glorious deeds the people there would tell me that they had been greater than Motecuhzoma's." He further complained of one community that "they exaggerated to such an extent, raising their superiority to the skies, that before they reached the stars with their tales I was forced, with soft words, to get them to admit that they had been subjects of and had paid tribute to Nezahualpilli of Tezcoco." Durán's lament exemplifies the tension between Spanish and Nahua conceptions of history. The Spaniards idealistically viewed histories as objective records of past events and as such inherently truthful.[1] By contrast, for the Aztecs histories were more openly subjective, selective records of those past events that best explained the present and put the local community in the best possible light. Given these overt manipulations in Aztec histories, it is ironic that when the Spanish missionary Motolinía (1971: 75) was discussing the books of the Nahuas, he said that only one genre recounted the "truth" – the history books! For Motolinía and his countrymen, if a book recorded history, it was by definition truthful; hence Durán's exasperation with the clear subjectivity of his sources.

Despite the local agenda of the colonial-period Aztec histories, they were not complete fabrications; these histories had to have some relationship to a preexisting Aztec conceptual framework. Discussing the role of history after the conquest, Susan Gillespie (1998: 256) has pointed out that the disruption brought with the conquest resulted in a remodeling of history as the Nahuas jockeyed for new positions of status within a changing political system. Within these new histories, Gillespie argued, it is still possible to discover the indigenous symbol system that structured Aztec ideology and historical conceptions before the conquest. Indeed, in these colonial period histories we can still observe the ordering and manipulation of history that must have been typical of the preconquest period. Long before the Spanish invasion, the Aztecs had imposed their own form of rule over many Nahua communities that surely then reconfigured their histories to jockey for position under Aztec imperial control. Hence the local bias that characterizes Aztec histories should not diminish their value because it is these very biases that reveal the issues of overriding importance in indigenous politics and ideologies under both

Aztec and Spanish rule. That is, the manipulations typical of Aztec histories created after the conquest highlight the issues important to the patron city and reveal how history itself played a key role in the politics of the present.

The Spanish invasion and subsequent destruction of Aztec historical manuscripts ultimately brought a resurgence in historical record-keeping because of the political role of history for the Aztecs. With the restructuring of the Aztec empire imposed by Spanish imperial rule, histories remained essential tools to argue, based on the past, for new positions of power in the present. Because Aztec histories were living systems and constantly modified, the upheavals brought with the impositions of Aztec and then Spanish control created ideal opportunities for political maneuvering through historical revisionism (Gillespie 1989: xxvi). In short, the recording and reading of Aztec histories were acts of political persuasion, and as such served a key function in the upheavals caused by Spanish colonialism and before that by the imposition of Aztec control.

Aztec Historians

The Aztec language distinguishes the painting of history books from the reading of these books. The painters/scribes were called *tlacuiloque*, and based on a description by the Spanish missionary Bernardino de Sahagún (1959–82: X, 28), they were considered more as craftsmen: "The scribe: writings, ink [are] his special skills. [He is] a craftsman, an artist, a user of charcoal, … [a drawer with charcoal; a painter who dissolves colors, grinds pigments, uses colors]." This description focuses on the act of painting rather than the content of the histories. By contrast, the interpreters of the books were called *tlamatinime*, or wise men (ibid. 29): "The wise man [is] exemplary. He possesses writings; he owns books. [He is] tradition, the road; [a leader of men, a rower, a companion, a bearer of responsibility, a guide]." The wise men, then, were seen more as leaders, and as such must have overseen the creation of Aztec history books and may have even been painters themselves.

History and the pictorial writing system by which histories were recorded and interpreted were taught in an institution called the *calmecac*. Though the *calmecac* was known as a place for the teaching of priests, it was more generally an elite school for the children of nobles and worthy commoners (Calnek 1988: 175–76; Sahagún 1959–82: III, 49, 59). According to Sahagún, many things were taught at the *calmecac*, including the "*xiuhamatl*," or book of years, the term for history books among the Aztecs (ibid. 65). There seem to have been a dozen or so *calmecacs* in Tenochtitlan proper, and some of these may have been devoted to specific specializations such as the painting of histories (Calnek 1988: 172). Moreover, this specialization was likely passed from father to son. An image in the sixteenth-century *Codex Mendoza* pictures the bathing and naming ceremony for male children. Each was presented with miniature bows and arrows, suggesting future prowess in warfare, and also with miniature instruments associated with his father's craft specialization; one of these

corresponds to a sign for manuscript painting (Calnek 1988: 173). That a small boy and not a girl receives this particular instrument perhaps suggests that historians were typically male; however, an image in the sixteenth-century *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* pictures an Aztec noblewoman, in fact the wife of a ruler, painting a book which suggests that women could also be painters.

Once graduated from the *calmecac*, historians – both the *tlacuiloque* and *tlamatinime* – found employment with the state, giving shape and voice to a community's history and identity. In his description of the officials associated with an Aztec royal house, the Spanish missionary and historian Juan de Torquemada (1986: II, 544) includes historians who, he says, both managed the books and wrote chronicles of the major events of the day. The actual history books were stored in royal archives, called *amoxcalli*, or book-houses, and both major and minor cities seem to have had such archives as a part of the royal house (Alva Ixtlilxochitl 1997: I, 286; Zorita 1994: 110). Indeed, the Nahuatl term *altepetlacuilo* (*altepetl* "scribe") suggests that each community would have had its own local historian (Nicholson 1971: 59), and because Aztec historians were so closely tied to the royal house and considered elite members of society, they may have been members of the royal family itself. Nevertheless, the historians must have been closely supervised and instructed by the local ruler. Since one of the latter's primary duties was the preservation of historical memory, he would have played a heavy hand in the construction of his community's history; thus the *tlacuiloque* likely had little autonomy over the histories they wrote (Florescano 1994: 39–40).

Historical Genres

The content and genres of Aztec histories were fairly standardized. Many begin by recounting the migration of the patron community into the Valley of Mexico; then they focus on the foundation of the community and build-up of power by highlighting important conquests and sometimes marriage alliances. Some extant histories also record genealogical information, astronomical and climatic events, and hardships such as famines. Most histories continue uninterrupted through the Spanish invasion and conquest, with the Spaniards simply replacing the Aztecs in power.

The histories could take various formats. Cartographic histories and time-based annals (year-to-year histories) were most common, with the choice of format for the most part linked to content: cartography was most useful for migratory histories because of the emphasis on place, while the annalistic format with its emphasis on time was the preferred form for imperial history (Boone 1994). In fact, Elizabeth Boone (1996) has argued that the latter format itself was a diagnostic trait of Tenochca, or Mexica, imperial control. By aligning their history with the calendar, Mexica rulers, as the major patrons of the histories, emphasized a link between the Mexica state and the progression of time, locating time itself at Tenochtitlan. Meanwhile, the appropriation of the year-count genre by subjects of the Mexica highlighted their link to the imperial leaders and their membership within the

empire. In effect, the subsidiary centers modeled their histories after Tenochtitlan's in the hopes of applying the prestige of the capital to the local community.

The history books were painted on deer hide, paper (made of bark or maguey fiber), or even cloth, and they could be rolled, folded, laid flat, or even displayed on walls. The maps vary in size; those included in the *Codex Xolotl* are about 42×48 cm., while those that make up the *Mapas de Cuauhtinchan* measure as much as 109×204 cm., which suggests that some were intended for public display. The year-count annals were longer manuscripts that were folded accordion-style and, extended, could be as much as 625 cm. long (as in the case of the *Tira de Tepechpan*). Although many of these manuscripts are today called codices, these were not the bound books typical of Europe; instead they consisted of long sheets of paper that, because of their accordion-style folds, allowed for greater flexibility in use. While a bound book can only reveal two pages at any one time, a screenfold document can display any number of pages at once, even the entire manuscript. Moreover, folding the leaves makes it possible to compare nonsequential imagery. The document can be folded and extended so as to compare records from the front of the document with those in the back. Such a format enhances the interpretive potential of the histories: past events can be compared with later ones to reveal any patterning that may be at work.

Cyclical patterning is an inherent feature of the Aztec calendar that structured the year count histories. In the Aztec calendar, years were designated by one of four signs – Rabbit, Reed, Flint, and House – that cycled through coefficients from 1 to 13. Thus the first year in the calendar was 1 Rabbit, followed by 2 Reed, 3 Flint, 4 House, 5 Rabbit … 13 Rabbit, then 1 Reed, etc. This resulted in a 52-year cycle, after which the years would be repeated. The repetition of the same year names every 52 years lends the Aztec calendar and perception of time a cyclical aspect. Hence years of the same name were believed to share particular associations. For example, famine ravaged central Mexico in the year 1 Reed; so it was feared that famines would continue to occur in this same year in the future. H.B. Nicholson (1975: 491) calls this repetitive, cyclical aspect of Aztec history "pattern history," and it is clear that Aztec historians manipulated their historical records to take advantage of the cyclical nature of the calendar. By associating important historical events with key dates from the past, an Aztec historian imbued that event with sacred legitimacy (see further below).

The Aztec Writing System

Aztec histories were recorded by using a pictorial system of writing. This writing system has often been described as limited or partial because the bulk of information was conveyed in pictorial form, which leaves meaning open to ambiguity and interpretation. Nevertheless, the Aztec writing system was capable of phoneticism and specificity when necessary. For example, more specific information, such as the names of peoples and places, was conveyed through hieroglyphic compounds using

logograms that worked as either signs or syllables and effectively "spelled" a word with little ambiguity. Other information was encapsulated in a fairly standardized iconography that essentially functioned as a visual communication system.[2]

A page from the sixteenth-century *Codex Mendoza* (figure 18.1) provides a clear example of how this writing system worked. Along the left side of the page is a string of year signs from the Aztec calendar; these represent the years of a ruler's reign, beginning with 1 Flint, followed by 2 House, 3 Rabbit, 4 Reed, etc., and ending at 13 Flint. The ruler is pictured to the right with standardized iconography that conveys his high rank. A speech scroll issues from his mouth, conveying his role as *tlatoani*, or speaker, the official term for an Aztec ruler. Moreover, he wears a simple cotton mantle and a turquoise diadem and sits with knees drawn up in front on a woven reed mat; in the Aztec pictorial system all these elements function as signs of rulership. The ruler is indistinguishable from the other rulers pictured in this same manuscript except for the inclusion of his name glyph. In this example, an obsidian-encrusted serpent extends from the back of his head and identifies the ruler more specifically as one named Itzcoatl, or Obsidian Serpent. In front of Itzcoatl are three spears topped by a shield, which function as ideograms for warfare. Moreover, the shield is covered with eagle down balls, which in the Aztec iconographic system symbolize sacrifice; this also suggests the ultimate purpose of warfare – the accumulation of sacrificial victims for the gods. A series of temples with smoking, overturned summits are distributed around the rest of the page and signify the conquests of specific territories: each temple is marked with a hieroglyphic compound that provides a phonetic approximation of a place name. The first conquered city-state is at the top left; this is Itzcoatl's significant defeat of the town of Azcapotzalco (Ant Heap), whose place glyph is an ant on a sand-covered circle. Overall, then, this page tells us that Itzcoatl ruled as *tlatoani* of Tenochtitlan (whose founding was pictured earlier in the same manuscript) from 1 Flint (1428) to 13 Flint (1440) and in those years conquered the eleven city-states recorded here.

Some see the Aztec pictorial writing system more as a mnemonic device that inspired oral recitations and therefore consider it less valuable than an alphabetic system that leaves less open to interpretation. These scholars tend to stress the limitations of a pictorial system of writing in terms of the ambiguities that remain unresolved if one does not already know the history recorded.[3] Because the Aztec educational system emphasized oral discourse and memorization, the readers of the histories could indeed already have known the stories they saw in the books. Accordingly, Miguel León-Portilla (1986: 11) argues that the memorization of texts was an indispensable complement to the preservation of history, and H. B. Nicholson (1971: 53) posits that "a standardized 'explanatory' verbal narration, memorized virtually word-perfect" could have accompanied each pictorial history.

However, the Aztec pictorial system of writing was clearly capable of more phonetic, unambiguous texts when and where precision was necessary, which suggests that the texts were not simply memorized (Lacadena 2008; Whittaker 2009). Indeed, the important conquests of Itzcoatl's reign were recorded in the *Codex Mendoza* in a fairly unambiguous manner, and one need not know Aztec history to

Figure 18.1 *Codex Mendoza*. Courtesy of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

have a basic understanding of the content of this page. Hence these manuscripts do not just call to mind a past event already memorized, but guide the telling or interpretation of that event; they do preserve histories and not simply memories (Douglas 2010: 13–14). Moreover, an interpreter could certainly choose to embellish his account depending on the circumstances of his reading. Thus the characterization of the Aztec writing system as a simple mnemonic device ignores both its phonetic potential and its interpretive strength.

In fact, it was not always the intent of Aztec histories to record a precise idea or unique message. The brevity and lack of specificity in these histories served their political intentions by allowing for varied readings based on political objectives and the nature of the present audience. As Federico Navarette (2004) shows in his study of the sixteenth-century *Codex Azcatitlan*, this manuscript (and others like it) had the potential to communicate one set of information to an indigenous audience and a different set to Spanish listeners. Before the conquest, too, local histories were likely pitched at both a local and an imperial audience, and surely with different intentions in mind. As Navarette points out, the indeterminacy inherent in pictorial writing would have appealed to Aztec scribes, who could make use of ambiguity to keep interpretations open and fluid so that, when elucidating their books, the wise men, or *tlamatinime*, could provide a reading suitable for that particular audience and political circumstance.

In short, what some may see as a limitation of a pictorial system of writing, the inability to disambiguate two potential readings (Martin 2006: 77), was in fact its strength. One pictorial record could communicate different readings to different audiences, thereby fulfilling the political intentions of the local community, which would have been in flux at any given time. As Emily Umberger (1981: 11) writes, "The lack of specificity in Aztec inscriptions which to us may seem to be a disadvantage of the system … was actually an intrinsic characteristic which the Aztecs used for symbolic and even political purposes." Pictorial writing better suited the purposes of the empire and its conception of history as political persuasion because the interpretive richness of a visual system allowed records of the past to remain flexible and amenable to modification and interpretation. Moreover, pictorial writing does not depend on language; thus pictorial writings could more easily be understood and interpreted in a multiethnic, multilingual empire such as the Aztec Triple Alliance (Martin 2006: 86). Ultimately, the intent of these histories, which acted more as political arguments than "true" records of the past, surely influenced their pictorial form.

The Performance of History

For the Aztecs, histories were not silent. At the elite level, they were communicated through oral recitations and interpretations, but to reach wider sectors of society the histories were publicly performed. Thus the history books may also have acted as scripts to guide ritual performances that took advantage of a number of sensory

devices to bring the histories to life: literally to bring the past to the present. The performances seem to have incorporated song and dance, poetry, and music. The Spanish friar and historian Diego Durán (1971: 299) described such performances: "In their kingdoms songs had been composed describing their feats, victories, conquests, genealogies, and their extraordinary wealth. I have heard these sung many a time at public dances, and even though they were in honor of their native lords, I was elated to hear such high praise and notable feats." The "victories, conquests, and genealogies" to which he refers are themes typically recorded in the pictorial histories, which suggests the pictorials were used as prompts for such performances. Moreover, the fact that Durán himself felt "elated" by the performances suggests the persuasive aspect of such discourse, which was meant to convince people of its validity through poetic performance. A group of poems written in Nahuatl in the sixteenth century, known as the *Cantares Mexicanos*, often concern historic events, thus confirming the close correlation between history and poetry. As Enrique Florescano (1994: 55) writes: "The reactualization of the past, then, mobilized all of the expressive resources of these cultures and had as a goal the vivid reproduction of what happened. It incorporated it as a past living and acting in the present reality."

Such performances imply a public context and suggest that Aztec histories were not the sole purview and interest of specialists. Aztec histories clearly were political rhetoric, and it was through their public performance that they communicated the interests of the ruling class to the people (King 1994: 102–3). These performed histories would have conveyed a state-sanctioned version of Aztec history, and as such were standardized and propagandistic.

Nonetheless, when one considers the corpus of extant Aztec histories from throughout the empire, one is struck both by their multiplicity and by the fact that many histories from outside the Aztec capital city openly contradict the official history coming from Tenochtitlan. Even within one community, multiple and contradictory accounts of historical events may coexist. For example, the people of one town, Cuauhtinchan, kept multiple histories of the community that sometimes repeat and at other times contradict each other (Leibsohn 1994). Camilla Townsend (2009) has made sense of this problem by showing that when native peoples consulted their histories in a Spanish legal context, multiple documents and viewpoints were brought together to get at the historical truth. The manuscripts guided oral readings by knowledgeable interpreters, and multiple histories were consulted and interpreted in what Townsend describes as a "cellular manner." The implication is that such consultations were based on a preconquest tradition of considering multiple and repetitious documents to reveal historical truth. As Townsend (2009: 627) explains, "an author or arranger was apparently expected to provide texts from different political entities, either in pairings or some sort of rotation, covering the same time period, so that the individual cells, when taken together, made a stronger statement." Thus, when a political or legal problem had to be solved, it was better to have multiple histories at the ready because historical truth came out of a collection of perspectives and contributions (Townsend 2009: 642).

Ordering of History

Another aspect of historical truth for the Aztecs must have been tied to the ordering of a community's history. Official Mexica history was elegantly tied to the calendar; key events happened on significant anniversary dates, which infused those events with a sense of divine destiny. Indeed, the burning of old history books by Itzcoatl indicates that the Mexica purposely tried to impose on their subjects an official version of their history; this was communicated to them through monuments and the year-count annals.[4] The orderly nature of this official history suggests that an elegantly constructed history was another means by which the Aztecs legitimized their rule.

The official account of Mexica history often begins with their migration. The Mexica migrants were said to have left their homeland, the island city of Aztlan, in the year 1 Flint, a date that became a touchstone in their history, as highly significant events happened for them in years with this same name. A number of colonial period pictorial histories from Tenochtitlan open with an image of these early Mexica migrants. In the *Codex Mexicanus*, they literally step from the shore onto the time-line in the year 1 Flint, thereby initiating both time and Mexica history (figure 18.2). The *Codex Boturini* shows the Mexica migrants in their homeland of Aztlan and beginning their journey in this same year. The Mexica were compelled to migrate by their patron deity Huitzilopochtli, and it is surely no coincidence that 1 Flint was also the calendric date of Huitzilopochtli, suggesting that he was born on a day with this same name. The god told his people that they would see a sign for their true homeland, a vision of an eagle on a cactus. Providentially, they saw this vision in the year 2 House and on a miserable swampy island they called Tenochtitlan.

Figure 18.2 *Codex Mexicanus.* Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

There is a sense of poetry and order in this migration legend (Boone 1991). The migration begins in a year with the name 1 Flint and ends in a year with the name 2 House, the very next year in the calendric sequence though here separated from the first by a number of fifty-two year cycles. Based on the cosmological significance of these dates, they are probably the result of historical manipulation. In fact, some histories from less eminent cities, such as the *Tira de Tepechpan* (see below), record different dates for the foundation of Tenochtitlan, typically more recent and without cosmological implications. Also both Aztlan and Tenochtitlan were island cities; thus, the Mexica ended where they began but on a far grander scale. The repetitions and ordering of the history suggest a sense of divine providence. The Mexica were destined to found this particular city and rise to be leaders of a vast empire. Though this is clearly a mytho-historic account, the poetic ordering of these events provides them with a sense of legitimacy. Truth in the Aztec conception of history does not depend on whether or not these events happened as they are told; rather, the poetic and elegant nature of the account marks it as truth in a divine sphere.

With their histories based on an annalistic format, Mexica rulers became conceptually linked to the timeline and royal dynasties were seen as repeating cycles. The first official Mexica ruler, Acamapichtli, was inaugurated some years after the founding of Tenochtitlan, and it is surely no coincidence that this happened in the year 1 Flint (1376), the anniversary of the beginning of the Mexica migration. Then, according to the *Codex Mendoza*, the temporal cycle begun with Acamapichtli's accession in 1 Flint (1376) ended exactly one 52-year cycle later with the death of the Mexica ruler Chimalpopoca in 13 Reed (1427). The seating of his successor Itzcoatl in another 1 Flint year (1428) began a new temporal cycle that coincided with his defeat of Azcapotzalco and the subsequent growth of Aztec imperial rule, discussed above (figure 18.1). An underlying cyclical pattern is also evident in the reigns of two other Mexica rulers, who not coincidentally also share a name – Motecuhzoma I and Motecuhzoma II. Susan Gillespie (1989) has shown the structural equivalents between the two; not only did they share a name and die in a year with the same name but separated by fifty-two years (2 Flint), but each of their deaths were followed by a shift in the dynastic sequence, with their daughters playing key roles in the selection of the succeeding *tlatoque*.

Clearly, the Mexica imposed cosmic order on history, which suggests that the more powerfully structured one's history was, the stronger its political argument appeared. The new Mexica history composed after Itzcoatl's famous book-burning was also idealized insofar as dates were chosen because of their symbolic associations (Umberger 1988: 353). The conclusion seems justified, therefore, that the similarities between the reigns of the two Motecuhzomas and between Acamapichtli and Itzcoatl, respectively, reflect a consciously imposed, cyclical patterning typical of Aztec history, which, as Gillespie argues, reflects underlying principles related to kingship in the Aztec world. This symbolic connection between the calendar and the royal dynasty, then, expressed a relationship between the cosmos and the state: the rulers, their histories, and their destinies were tied to the cosmos. As Gillespie (1989: 17) puts it,

> The patterned repetition of the genealogy, seen in terms of biological relationships and succession, events in the reigns of the kings, and in one case their names is not unique to the Tenochtitlan dynasty but is a function of certain concepts of rulership in which the nature of the king is tied to the functioning of the cosmos; thus, kingship, like the cosmos, is cyclical.

In sum, Aztec histories were given poetic form to explain and legitimize the present. The supremacy of the Mexica within the Aztec empire was explained by such ordering of history: the links between the state and the calendar proved that they were destined for greatness. Moreover, Aztec cosmology insists on order; the ordered history of the Mexica thus connects them more closely with the sacred sphere (Florescano 1994: 10–11). This sacred underpinning of Aztec histories is another distinctive characteristic of Nahua perceptions of history. As Florescano notes, "if for western thought an event is historical only if it is produced in a profane time and space, stripped of its transcendental meaning, for the Mexica mentality, the historical is exactly the opposite: the event that has weight is the one that is endowed with significance that transcends the time and place in which it is located" (Florescano 1994: 47). For the Mexica, historical events could only be legitimate if they were tied to the sacred.

The Case of Tepechpan

The ordering of history was not just the purview of the Mexica imperial leaders. Even historians of relatively minor cities within the Aztec empire imposed order on their histories, presumably to send similar messages on the legitimacy of their own royal dynasties. For example, the *Tira de Tepechpan* is an annalistic history created in the city of Tepechpan during the second half of the sixteenth century. In the manuscript, important events from 1298 through 1596 are written pictographically above and below a continuous line of Aztec year signs that runs the length of their history; the upper register pertains to Tepechpan and the lower to Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec empire. In 1519, Spaniards entered Tepechpan's history, but rather than bringing it to a close, they simply replaced the Mexica ruling apparatus with their own; at least this is the way the contributors to the *Tira* represent it. Tepechpan was a secondary city in the Aztec empire and as such subject to Texcoco, one of the three cities of the Triple Alliance. It clearly modeled its history after Tenochtitlan's and did so through a similar ordering of history. Even the annalistic format linked Tepechpan's history to the Aztec capital. The ultimate goal of the manuscript was to establish the antiquity and prestige of this minor city through its connection with the great Tenochtitlan (Diel 2008).

Throughout, the *Tira de Tepechpan* establishes a clear connection between Tepechpan's rulers and the calendar. For example, by changing the color of the year disks following changes in Tepechpan rulership, the painters of the *Tira* show that Tepechpan's rulers are in harmony with the calendar. Thus, for example, at the first appearance of a specific Tepechpan ruler (the future founder of the city), the year
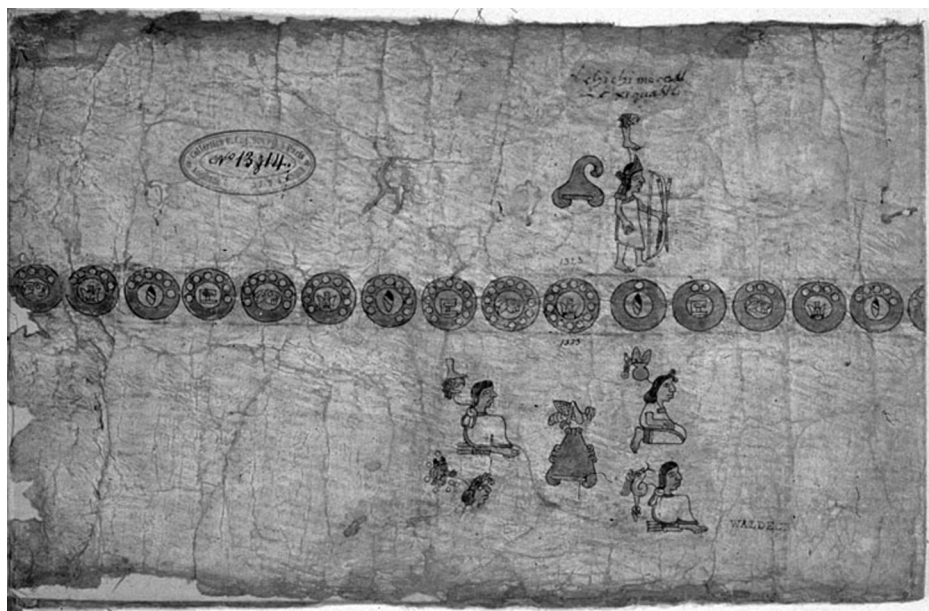
Figure 18.3 *Tira de Tepechpan*. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

disks change from blue to red (figure 18.3). He is shown here in the act of migration; providentially, this happens in the year 1 Flint, the traditional starting date for the migration of the Mexica. The year 1 Flint was a sacred date for the Aztecs in general, but by associating their patron deity, migratory journey, and two key rulers with this date, the Mexica appropriated its sacred significance to an extraordinary degree. Moreover, both the Mexica migrants in the *Codex Mexicanus* (figure 18.2) and the Tepechpaneca migrants in the *Tira* (figure 18.3) make their first stop in the same city: the icon of a hill with a curl at the top indicates Teoculhuacan, or the Place of the Curved Hill. This city had sacred significance for the Aztecs as it was associated with the ancient Toltec people whom they highly revered and whose civilized habits the Mexica claimed to have inherited. Thus the creators of the glorified history of Tepechpan applied to their rather minor city the sacredness of 1 Flint and Teoculhuacan that were typically associated with the Mexica.

The Tepechpan dynastic sequence also reveals cyclical patterning and further associates Tepechpan's rulers with the calendar, just as the Mexica rulers were. The *Tira* largely focuses on the accessions and deaths of Tepechpan's rulers; from the foundation of the city to the years just before the Spanish invasion, Tepechpan had six rulers, named Icxicuauhtli, Caltzin, Tencoyotzin I, Quaquauhtzin I, Tencoyotzin II, and Quaquauhtzin II. Rule in Tepechpan passed from father to son, and a diagram of the shifts from father to son reveals an interesting pattern in which the leaders of each set were separated from each other by one genera- tion (table 18.1). The first set consists of the Tepechpan founder, his grandson

Table 18.1 Dynastic Sequence of
Tepechpan

Set 1:	Set 2:
Icxicuauhtli	Caltzin
Tencoyotzin I	Quaquauhtzin I
Tencoyotzin II	Quaquauhtzin II

Tencoyotzin I, and his great-great-grandson Tencoyotzin II. Tepechpan's second ruler Caltzin, his grandson Quaquauhtzin I, and his great-great-grandson Quaquauhtzin II are members of the second set. Through its correlation with approximately two generations, the fifty-two year cycle promoted a special relationship between grandfathers and grandsons, who tended to live during the same named years. That the final two rulers in each set have the names of their grandfathers underscores the cyclical patterning that is at work here; so do the reigns of the rulers. The reigns of each of the rulers in the first set included the year 2 Reed, which was a key date in the calendar because it marked the completion of one calendric cycle and the hoped-for start of the next. The rulers of the second set also exhibit similarities. For example, the two rulers named Quaquauhtzin both ruled for only a few years that are marked with blue year disks in the *Tira de Tepechpan*, and both their reigns were followed by an interregnum, marked with yellow year disks. Moreover, a woman – presumably their mother – is shown before both of their accessions; the explanation perhaps is that these women acted as regents before their sons could be installed. Just as the Mexica historians did, the Tepechpan historians most likely also manipulated history to make it fit an elegant cosmic pattern. The implication is that Tepechpan's rulers must be legitimate and even favored by the gods because their destinies were so harmoniously tied to the calendar — a bold statement for a rather minor city in the empire but typical of the propagandistic nature of Aztec history.

Conclusion

Because Aztec historians were primarily concerned with creating political arguments based on sacred traditions, Aztec histories had a large legendary component. Thus the search for objective facts in Aztec histories is often fruitless.[5] Supposedly historical events set in the distant past were included as political myths that helped establish legitimacy and claims to lands; these myths served as charters or deeds of title for local communities (Price 1980). More recent historical events, such as ruler accessions and key battles, were also included selectively in the Aztec histories and set in harmonious order with the calendar, as if the poetic and ordered nature of their histories communicated an essential truth. Indeed, these histories were also brought to life through performances that used music, song, dance, and poetry, sensory devices that might further elevate the histories to a sacred truth.

In the years just after the conquest, Aztec cities continued to commission histories in the preconquest tradition, setting their past in a cosmic light, clearly with the expectation that such histories would continue to argue for rights and prestige under Spanish rule, as they had under Aztec control. However, they soon realized that past glories held little value for the Spaniards. As the colonial period progressed, Aztec historical conceptions clearly changed: many communities continued to record their history under Spanish colonial rule, but these histories increasingly emphasized the hardships they now had to endure, such as the epidemics that decimated the native populations. Overall, then, Aztec histories changed from an elegantly constructed past to a more chaotic record of the colonial present. This shift must have reflected an increasing perception that the imposition of Spanish rule had initiated a new era, marked by a breakdown of the order and sacred underpinnings that had been typical of the Aztec historical tradition.

Notes

1   Of course, this is an idealized view, as Spanish histories were also inherently subjective constructions, especially considering the charged circumstances in which their histories of Aztec Mexico were written (for examples, see Townsend 2003 and Clendinnen 1990).

2   For thorough analyses of the Aztec writing system, see Dibble 1971, Nicholson 1973, Galarza 1979, Prem 1992, Lacadena 2008, and Whittaker 2009.

3   Calnek 1979 considers the nature of the Aztec pictorial system of writing in terms of ambiguity; León-Portilla 1986: 11; 1992: 69–70; Florescano 1994: 36–39 discuss the limitations of such a system of writing.

4   The fact that histories from other city-states sometimes contradict the official Mexica version of history suggests they were not entirely successful.

5   Smith 1984 considers the issue of the historical validity of Aztec histories in some detail by focusing on accounts of the Mexica migration. He finds that an analysis of multiple Aztec histories does reveal some historical truth concerning the essential facts of the migration, despite the large legendary component in these accounts.

References

Alva Ixtlilxochitl, F. de. 1985. *Obras históricas.* Mexico City.

Barlow, R. 1945. "Some Remarks on the Term 'Aztec Empire'." *The Americas* 1: 345–49.

Berdan, F.F., R.E. Blanton, E.H. Boone, et al. (eds.). 1996. *Aztec Imperial Strategies.* Washington, DC.

Boone, E.H. 1991. "Migration Histories as Ritual Performance." In D. Carrasco (ed.), *To Change Place: Aztec Ceremonial Landscapes*, 121–51. Niwot, CO.

Boone, E.H. 1994. "Aztec Pictorial Histories: Records without Words." In Boone and Mignolo 1994: 50–76.

Boone, E.H. 1996. "Manuscript Painting in the Service of Imperial Ideology." In Berdan et al. 1996: 181–208.

Boone, E.H. 1998. "Pictorial Documents and Visual Thinking in Postconquest Mexico." In Boone and Cummins 1998: 149–99.

Boone, E.H. 2000. *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs.* Austin.

Boone, E.H., and T. Cummins (eds.). 1998. *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World.* Washington, DC.

Boone, E.H., and W. Mignolo (eds.). 1994. *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes.* Durham, NC.

Calnek, E. 1979. "The Analysis of Prehispanic Central Mexican Historical Texts." *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* 13: 239–66.

Calnek, E. 1988. "The Calmecac and Telpochcalli in Pre-Conquest Tenochtitlan." In J.J. Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, and E. Quiñones Keber (eds.), *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún*, 169–77. Austin.

Carrasco, P. 1999. *The Tenocha Empire of Ancient Mexico: The Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Tetzcoco, and Tlacopan.* Norman, OK.

Clendinnen, I. 1990. "Cortés, Signs, and the Conquest of Mexico." In A. Grafton and A. Blair (eds.), *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 87–130. Philadelphia.

Dibble, C. 1971. "Writing in Central Mexico" In G.F. Ekholm and I. Bernal (eds.), *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 10: 322–32. Austin.

Diel, L.B. 2008. *The Tira de Tepechpan: Negotiating Place under Aztec and Spanish Rule.* Austin.

Douglas, E. de J. 2010. *In the Palace of Nezahualcoyotl: Painting Manuscripts, Writing the Pre-Hispanic Past in Early Colonial Period Tetzcoco, Mexico.* Austin.

Durán, D. 1971. *Book of the Gods and Rites and the Ancient Calendar.* Trans. F. Horcasitas and D. Heyden. Norman, OK.

Durán, D. 1994. *The History of the Indies of New Spain.* Trans. D. Heyden. Norman, OK.

Florescano, E. 1994. *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence.* Trans. A.G. Bork with K. Bork. Austin.

Galarza, J. 1979. *Estudios de escritura indígena tradicional (azteca-náhuatl).* Mexico City.

Gibson, C. 1964. *Aztecs under Spanish Rule.* Stanford.

Gillespie, S. 1989. *The Aztec Kings: The Construction of Rulership in Mexica History.* Tucson.

Gillespie, S. 1998. "The Aztec Triple Alliance: A Postconquest Tradition." In Boone and Cummins 1998: 233–263.

Hodge, M. 1996. "Political Organization of the Central Provinces." In Berdan et. al. 1996: 17–46.

King, M. 1994. "Hearing the Echoes of Verbal Art in Mixtec Writing." In Boone and Mignolo 1994: 102–36.

Lacadena, A. 2008. "Regional Scribal Traditions: Methodological Implications for the Decipherment of Nahuatl Writing." *The PARI Journal* 8: 1–22.

Lee, J. 2008. *The Allure of Nezahualcoyotl: Pre-Hispanic History, Religion, and Nahua Politics.* Albuquerque.

Leibsohn, D. 1994. "Primers for Memory: Cartographic Histories and Nahua Identities." In Boone and Mignolo 1994: 161–87.

León-Portilla, M. 1986. *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico.* Norman, OK.

León-Portilla, M. 1992. *The Aztec Image of Self and Society: An Introduction to Nahua Culture.* Salt Lake City.

Martin, S. 2006. "On Pre-Columbian Narrative: Representation across the Word – Image Divide." In J. Quilter and M. Miller (eds.), *A Pre-Columbian World*, 55–105. Washington, DC.

Motolinía, T. de Benvente. 1971. *Memoriales o libro de las cosas de Nueva España.* Mexico City.

Navarette, F. 2004. "The Hidden Codex of the Codex Azcatitlan." *Res* 45: 145–160.

Nicholson, H.B. 1971. "Pre-Hispanic Central Mexican Historiography." In *Investigaciones contemporáneas sobre historiadores mexicanos y norteamericanos*, 38–81. Mexico City.

Nicholson, H.B. 1973. "Phoneticism in the Late Pre-Hispanic Central Mexican Writing System." In E.P. Benson (ed.), *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 1–46. Washington, DC.

Nicholson, H.B. 1975. "Middle American Ethnohistory: An Overview." In H.F. Cline (ed.), *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 15: 487–505. Austin.

Prem, H. 1992. "Aztec Writing." In V. Bricker (ed.), *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians*, 5: 53–69. Austin.

Price, B. 1980. "The Truth is not in Accounts but in Account Books: On the Epistemological Status of History." In E.B. Ross (ed.), *Beyond the Myths of Culture: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, 155–80. New York.

Sahagún, B. de. 1959–82. *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*. 13 vols. Trans. C.E. Dibble and A.J.O. Anderson. Santa Fe.

Schroeder, S. 1991. *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco*. Tucson.

Smith, M. 1984. "The Aztlan Migrations of the Nahuatl Chronicles: Myth or History?" *Ethnohistory* 31: 153–86.

Smith, M., and F. Berdan. 1996. "Introduction." In Berdan et al. 1996: 1–9. Washington, DC.

Torquemada, J. de. 1986. *Monarquía Indiana*. Mexico City.

Townsend, C. 2003. "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico." *The American Historical Review* 108: 659–87.

Townsend, C. 2009. "Glimpsing Native American Historiography: The Cellular Principle in Sixteenth-Century Nahuatl Annals." *Ethnohistory* 56: 625–50.

Umberger, E. 1981. "The Structure of Aztec History." *Archaeoastronomy* 4: 10–18.

Umberger, E. 1988. "A Reconsideration of Some Hieroglyphs on the Mexica Calendar Stone." In J.K. Josserand and K. Dakin (eds.), *Smoke and Mist: Mesoamerican Studies in Memory of Thelma D. Sullivan*, I: 345–88. Oxford.

Whittaker, G. 2009. "The Principles of Nahuatl Writing." *Göttinger Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft* 16: 47–81.

Zorita, A. de. 1994. *Life and Labor in Ancient Mexico*. Trans. B. Keen. Norman, OK.

Corn and Her Story Traveled: Reading North American Graphic Texts in Relation to Oral Traditions

Lisa Brooks

Long before European colonization was even imagined, networks of exchange crisscrossed the Americas, connecting towns from the northeast coast of Wabanaki to the Southwest of greater Mexico and beyond. Indigenous intellectual traditions were carried along these trade routes, and within the towns that emerged in fertile river valleys along these old roads. These networks entailed not only the exchange of goods, including multiple varieties of corn, but of literary media, including the oral narratives and iconographic figures that depict the life-giving Corn Mother, her manifold transformations, and the multiple routes of her travel across the Americas. Employing corn as a central touchstone, this essay focuses on the interpretation of the graphic texts created and exchanged in these "ancient American" networks, known as the "Moundbuilding" or Mississippian "culture" to archaeologists and historians (Echo-Hawk 2000: 267).

(Re)Framing Ancient American History and Literary Media

Before moving towards interpretation, some discussion of frameworks and terms is essential. Two modes of binary categorization have previously hindered analysis of the ancient writing systems of the Americas: the assumption of the categories of "history" and "prehistory" and the framing of media as either "art/material culture" or "text/literature." In his impressive volume, *Book of the Fourth World*, Gordon

Brotherston asserts that the scholarly study of the "wealth of literary media" in the Americas has been inhibited by the adoption of frameworks established by past ethnographers, historians, and archaeologists that often elide complex indigenous geographies and intellectual traditions (1992: 4). He criticizes the "hallowed binary that separates" North America's "original inhabitants into two types, prehistoric and historic," noting that these categories are based in outdated conceptualizations of primitiveness and civilization (174). Recent historical works as diverse as Ned Blackhawk's award-winning scholarly monograph, *Violence Over the Land*, and Charles Mann's popular bestseller *1491* (both 2006) have revealed the erroneous assumptions made by past ethnographers and historians who represented historic Native communities ravaged by foreign diseases, warfare, resource depletion and other impacts of colonization as emblematic of a static state of primitive life. Because scholarship itself has been mired in such false assumptions, as Mann suggests, substantive research on ancient American history may have only just begun in the twenty-first century.

This discursive binary is also influential in maintaining a disciplinary division between archaeology, through which "prehistoric" (pre-European contact) peoples in the Americas are knowable through material culture, and history, which is largely based on the documentation of "historic" (post-European contact) Native peoples by European explorers and settlers. This practice limits the possibilities for analysis and carries with it ideological frameworks inherited from a past embedded in colonial ideologies. Brotherston relays, "Whereas this prehistoric–historic distinction may have had a certain practical use, it more surely carries an ideological charge that is both powerful and inimical to native interest. For it necessarily deprives natives of this part of America of their own history: they emerge, as it were, solely in order to be dispossessed, cut off from roots and political memory" (1992: 174). As scholars and tribal historians are beginning to assert, we need new terms, as well as new interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to avoid prematurely confining our analysis. The Pawnee historian Roger Echo-Hawk has suggested, "In conceptual terms, scholarship on the past should revisit the bibliocentric presumptions of 'prehistory,' and pursue, instead, the study of 'ancient American history'—an approach that treats oral documents as respectable siblings of written documents" (2000: 267).

As Brotherston argues, in agreement with Echo-Hawk, "The concept of the Fourth World text and literature in general has been especially fragmented as a result of having had imposed upon it imported notions of literary medium. For a start, jejeune Western pronouncements on what does and does not constitute script, and the categorical binary that separates oral from written, have proved especially inept when applied to the wealth of literary media in native America" (1992: 4). Brotherston argues in his book that interpretations of these media are deeply enriched, if not made wholly possible, through immersion in and interaction with the oral traditions to which they are tied. As both scholars and creative writers are demonstrating, graphic texts of the ancient Americas can and should be read with interpretive frameworks drawn from indigenous oral traditions. Indeed

the established binary between the oral and the written, and between the image and the word, is contradicted by the worldviews encoded within indigenous languages.

Image and Word: *Tlacuilolli*, *Awikhiganak*, and Wampum

Laguna Pueblo author Leslie Marmon Silko, discussing the codices on which her novel *Almanac of the Dead* is based, comments on the "rich visual language" of the Mesoamerican "painted books," observing that "the Mixtec and Maya" "combined painting and writing, two activities that Europeans consider distinct." As she notes, in the Nahuatl language the word for the artisans who created the codices, *tlacuilo*, meant both "painter and scribe," and as Brotherston relays, the "ingenious visual language" of "Mesoamerican iconic script is designated by the Nahuatl term *tlacuilolli*, that which is produced with a brush-pen by the painter-scribe" (1996: 156–57; Brotherston 1992: 50). In his introduction to a highly regarded translation of the Quiché Maya *Popol Vuh*, Dennis Tedlock likewise relates, "In Mayan languages the terms for writing and painting were and are the same, the same artisans practiced both skills" (1996: 27–28). In the codices these scribes created, "there is a dialectical relationship between the writing and the pictures: the writing not only records words but sometimes offers pictorial clues to its meaning. As for the pictures, they not only depict what they mean but have elements that can read as words."

Similarly, in *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, novelist Louise Erdrich tells us that in the Ojibwe language (or Anishinaabemowin) of the Great Lakes and Plains, the words for book and rock painting are almost identical, and the root of both these words (*mazina*) is "the root for dozens of words all concerned with made images and with the substances upon which the images are put … including photograph, movie theater, and tv." Erdrich observes, "The Ojibwe people were great writers from way back and synthesized the oral and written tradition by keeping mnemonic scrolls of inscribed birchbark. The first paper, the first books … Yes," she writes, "I figure books have been written around here ever since someone had the idea of … writing on birchbark with a sharpened stick. Books are nothing all that new" (2003: 11). The same is true for the Western Abenaki language, which is related to Anishinaabemowin. The root word *awigha-* denotes to draw, to write, to map. The word *awikhigan* that originally described birchbark messages, maps, and scrolls, later came to encompass books (Brooks 2008: xxi).

In the Northeast woodlands, where the birch tree is prolific, birchbark *awikhiganak* were used for relaying messages, making maps, remembering songs, and recalling communal histories (Brooks, 8–9; Warhus 1997: 8–15; Warren 2009). Ojibwe scrolls, written on birchbark, portray Anishinaabe movement west into the Great Lakes from Wabanaki, the easternmost "land of the dawn," but they also document the migration of culture from the south, including the arrival of corn (Benton-Banai 1988; Brotherston 1992: 190). This history is set down with mnemonic glyphs that are read

Figure 19.1   Major Routes of the Wampum Trade in the Northeast. Map created by Jenny Davis and Lisa Brooks, with assistance from Guoping Huang and Wendy Guan using ArcGIS 9.2; courtesy of Harvard University. Originally published in Brooks 2008: xvi. Printed with permission of the author.

by those with specialized knowledge in a sacred context.[1] It is important to recognize that these graphic texts cannot be read independently of the oral traditions that are associated with them. The scrolls are still in use today, enabling a renewed relationship between Wabanaki and Anishinaabe people, separated not only because of this migration, but also because of the impacts of colonization. These graphic texts not only document past migrations, but provide maps for the future, showing what the people should look for in mapping the directions they might take in the generations to come. In Tedlock's words, this literature has "served as a complex navigation system for those who wished to see and move beyond the present" (1996: 29).

Oral traditions and graphic texts also combined in wampum belts, used in councils and ceremonies throughout the Northeast. Traditionally, wampum beads were crafted from the quahog shell in coastal villages between the Hudson River and Narragansett Bay, and then sent upriver to inland sites of exchange, including the Wabanaki and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) confederacies to the northeast and northwest (figure 19.1). Women wove wampum beads into belts that represented the binds between nations, while wampum strings were used in councils to bind

words to deeds. According to Seneca anthropologist Arthur Parker, Haudenosaunee leaders used wampum as a mnemonic device to "call to mind" the "laws" of the Confederacy, to "record matters of national or international importance," to symbolize political relationships, to console those in grief, and to secure a "pledge of truth" (1968: 20, 29, 37, 45–48).

The Great Law

One of the most significant narratives of Haudenosaunee history relates the formation of the Confederacy and its Great Law of Peace. Oral tradition, embedded in wampum belts, and later compiled in alphabetic texts, attests that the Confederacy emerged in response to uncontrollable fratricidal warfare. As Parker relates, "Men were ragged with sacrifice and the women scarred with flints, so everywhere there was misery" (1968: 17). In envisioning the Great Law, Dakanawida, the "Peacemaker," told his companion Hayonhwatha: "Our people are weak from warring and weak from being warred upon. We who speak with one tongue should combine." Hayonhwatha responded, "I am of the same mind … I believe that we should be as brothers in a family instead of enemies" (Parker 1989: 404). Dakanawida envisioned a "union of all the nations" who would act as "one head, one body, and one mind." Hayonhwatha contributed the ceremony of condolence to clear the minds of grief and "evil thoughts," and together with the female leader Jigonsaseh they shaped a Great Law that would enable the five nations of the Haudenosaunee, the Longhouse people, to maintain a "Great Peace" (Parker 1968: 24–25, 29; 1989: 405; Shenandoah and George 1998: 99–108; Mann and Fields 1997). Leaders were obliged to "work in unity," not for their "own interests," but "to benefit the people and for the generations not yet born" (Parker 1968: 29).

The confederacy was symbolized graphically in a "broad dark belt of wampum of thirty-eight rows," by Parker's account, "having a white heart in the center, on either side of which are two white squares all connected with the heart by white rows of beads" (figure 19.2). This belt, as recorded in the Great Law, "shall be the emblem of the unity of the Five Nations" (Parker 1968: 47). Still regarded as "the national belt of the Haudenosaunee," the "Hiawatha belt" represents the political and geographic space of the longhouse, including the five original nations of the Confederacy: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca.[2] The longhouse is simultaneously a political system, a geographic territory, and a physical structure where councils, ceremonies, and social dances are held. As with the scrolls, the recitation of the Great Law continues in the longhouse today, and its wampum belts cannot be interpreted without, or uncoupled from, its oral traditions.

An important example of recent scholarship that uses oral traditions, graphic media, and scientific evidence to interpret this critical period in Haudenosaunee history is Barbara Mann and Jerry Field's "A Sign in the Sky: Dating the League of the Haudenosaunee," which combines archaeological and historical, and astronomical data with a deeply informed ethnohistorical interpretation of Haudenosaunee

Figure 19.2 Hiawatha Belt, reproduction by Ken Maracle, Cayuga (2006). With permission by Iroquois Indian Museum, Howes Cave, New York.

narratives and mnemonic devices to discern the best chronological estimation to date for the founding of the Confederacy.[3] It also provides a thorough analysis of the agricultural and political complex that generated the emergence of the Great Law. As Mann and Field demonstrate, the narrative documents a historical transformation which resulted in a multifaceted political structure based on corn agriculture and a balance of powers – among nations and clans, between planters and hunters, and between peace and war. This theme of balanced opposition is common to the oral narratives and iconography that formed a shared "visual" and verbal "system" in the ancient American networks of what a coalition of art historians and archaeologists have termed the "Mississippian Iconographic Interaction Sphere (MIIS)" (Reilly and Garber 2007b: 3; Lankford 2007: 8).

Corn and Her Story Traveled: Indigenous Networks and Narrative Exchange

Wabanaki and Haudenosaunee peoples inhabited the northeast region of an extensive trade network that encompassed much of the continent. Within this "international" network were speakers of numerous divergent languages, but its participants shared a common symbolic language, which can be seen in the iconography and the oral traditions shared throughout this "Interaction Sphere" (Salisbury 1996: 437–39; Calloway 2003; Lankford 2004: 8; Reilly 2004: 125). At the center of this network was Cahokia, the great agricultural town at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and the largest classical city north of Mexico (Salisbury 1996: 440; Calloway 2003: 99–103; Diaz-Granados 2004:

141; Hall 2004; Pauketat 2004; Reilly and Garber 2007b: 4–5).[4] Cahokia was located at a confluence of waterways, "a crossroads" of trade, and a "crossroads" of concentrated artistic and social activity, as well as in a "region of bountiful resources" and "extremely fertile soil," all of which combined to help usher in an agricultural and cultural revolution (Diaz-Granados 2004: 141). One of the central aspects of this revolution was the corn seed and accompanying Corn Mother story that seems to have traveled up the Mississippi from Mexico to Cahokia, and proliferated through tributaries and towns to the West, on the Missouri River and its environs; to the North and its great lakes; to the Northeast, from the Ohio River valley to Haudenosaunee and Wabanaki territories; and to the Southeast, including the territories of the Cherokee and Muskogee peoples.

The use of graphic writing and iconographic representation in association with oral traditions may have come north from Mexico as well. These "verbal and visual languages" are most often associated with Mesoamerica, but it is also important to consider the spread of iconography and oral narratives into the networks of the Mississippi River and beyond (Brotherston 1992: 6). Although much study of indigenous oral traditions has been marred by the current geo-political border that divides the United States from Mexico, and the linguistic divide that this border sustains, it is critical to understand that for millennia on this continent such a border did not exist. Exchange thrived on the north-south routes that ran along the great riverways and into the gulf seas, with trade goods from the Gulf of Mexico arriving at cultural centers like Cahokia. Literary tropes in oral narratives and their accompanying iconography suggest, as Brotherston has observed, that these networks entailed not only "reciprocal traffic" in goods, but also in narrative exchange and influence (22). One of the most prevalent tropes of the MIIS is the power of planting. Oral traditions from throughout agricultural zones in North America share the narrative cycle of the Corn Mother, who brings maize to her children, which grows from her transformative body.

In a version told by Cherokee author Awiakta, corn emerges from the body of a woman. Two young men, curious about the origins of the fine food their grandmother makes, spy on her as she draws cornmeal from her body. Because of their intrusion on Selu's "private work," she grows ill, telling them she will die. She gives them explicit instructions to bury her in the ground and tend her body carefully, without disturbance. Only if they follow her directives attentively, she insists, will she return to feed them. "I will be the Corn-Mother," she says, and from her body arises the corn plant, which still today continues to feed the people – not only the Cherokees but the entire world (Awiakta 1993: 10–15).

Since corn itself emerged in the tropical climate of Mexico, this story probably originated there as well, making its way up indigenous roadways to the north, east, and west (Brotherston 1992: 184). Tropes and narrative strands in literature from Mexico and the American Southwest suggest parallels with corn creation stories throughout North America. While there is not adequate space here to elaborate on the complex connections between long and complicated narrative cycles, readers might turn to two well-known texts for examples. In Dennis Tedlock's translation

of the *Popol Vuh*, the figure of "Blood Woman" emerges from the underworld, pregnant with twins, to produce a "net full of ears" from a single corn plant for her suspicious "mother-in-law," Xmucane (36–8, 102–4). Emblematic of women planters, Blood Woman pulls the silk "straight out" from the top of the ear, enabling fertilization, and the single corn is then able to "reproduce itself" (103). The cooperative, participatory relationship between a fertile (pregnant) woman and a fertile (pregnant) ear of corn is essential to the story. Blood Woman then gives birth to her twin sons Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the offspring of Xmucane's sons, One and Seven Hunahpu (with the morning star being tied in glyphic representation to the day named "Hunahpu"). In the narrative, the twin sons must outwit the destructive and hungry "lords" of the Lower World (a feat which their fathers failed to accomplish) in order to enact the rebirth of maize in This World, where the Quiché people will emerge to become "the people of corn" (138–39).

In a contemporary work based on Laguna Pueblo oral traditions, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*, we might look to these manifestations in the figures of Kochininako (Yellow Woman), Estoyehmuut ("Arrowboy," the "great hunter," affiliated with the "morning star") and the twin "hero brothers" who must outwit the bottomless hunger and destructive impulses of the *Estrucuyu* or *Kunideeyah* "destroyers." These "Yellow Woman" stories map not only the emergence of corn but also the exchange between buffalo hunters on the plains and the people of corn among the ancient Pueblos (Silko 1981, 1996; Gunn Allen 1993; Calloway 2003).

At each location in which corn emerged, the story, like the plant, was adapted to particular environments. As Silko's stories illustrate, on the Plains and in the Southwest, buffalo and "Buffalo Man" are key figures in the Corn Mother stories (Silko 1981; Gunn Allen 1993; Calloway 2003). In the Southeast, deer play a similar role (Awiakta 1993; Justice 2006). In the Northeast – where the land is saturated with marshes, lakes, and ponds – water and water or game animals are a key element. In the Haudenosaunee creation story, for example, the earth emerges when a pregnant woman falls from the Sky, and the animals of the Water World below collaborate to create a space for her to land, working together to form "This World" on the back of the great turtle. Corn subsequently emerges from the body of Sky Woman's daughter, Tekwerahkwa, after Tekwerahkwa is killed by the rash impulse of one of her twin sons (Shenandoah and George 1998: 22–25). The Sky Woman story has many striking parallels with Mayan narratives, including the way it opens with the Sky and Water Worlds and continues with the emergence of "This World" on the back of a turtle. In Mayan iconography, the rebirth of the father Hunahpu in the form of a "maize god" is sometimes represented as a "maize god … emerging from … the back of a turtle (the earth)" (Tedlock 1996: 140).[5] Indeed, many of the Native nations with ties to the MIIS, including the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Delaware, Shawnee, and Cherokee, share a creation story of the earth formed on a turtle's back. As I learned when I lived in Iroquois territory, this story, in a culturally and geographically specific Haudenosaunee reading, may illustrate the incorporation of new elements – agriculture and its accompanying narrative – into an older story, from a time in

which the Northeast was immersed in water and the people were exceedingly reliant on game animals for survival.[6]

Throughout much of North America, agriculturalists, most often women, encouraged the diversification of plants, striving for ever increasing variation as the best possible strategy for survival in a changing, often unpredictable world. A prime example is Eastern flint corn, generated from the original plant that flourished in Mexico, but adapted to the wet, cold climate of Northern woodlands. The stories themselves contain pragmatic agricultural knowledge specific to local environments. For example, as Brotherston observes, the original Nahuatl narrative maps the "types and phases of American experiments in plant genetics, vegetal grafting, and seed fertilization" (1992: 276).

"Reading" the Corn Mother in Three-Dimensional Space

As corn and its story traveled these indigenous networks, they were accompanied by representational images, which acted as mnemonic devices for the storytellers who kept them. In many locations, images might be painted or engraved on walls or on media, including pottery, stone slabs, copper plates, hides, birchbark, and shells (Diaz-Granados 2004: 141). Yet the images could also be carried in portable three-dimensional figurines (see figures 19.3 and 19.4) that enabled a teller to recall the stories in a communal setting (ibid.).[7] In his compelling analysis of "Morning Star" figurines, Kent Reilly suggests that "we should think of" these figurines "as freeze-frame highlights of episodes" in the "mythic cycles" that were shared within the MIIS (2004: 132). Such figures, Reilly argues, are not singular artistic representations, but rather imagistic devices for recalling episodes in a narrative which would have been recounted in Council Houses during annual ceremonies. To interpret these representations of the Corn Mother, then, we need to look to the place where they emerged, and to the narratives related to them.

According to Reilly, the majority of the Corn Mother figurines "come from the environs of Cahokia," representative of its character as a center for agriculture and fertility (2004: 132). Carol Diaz-Granados offers a compelling contextualization of these figures, noting that they represent a singular concept that takes varied manifestations: "She is the mother of all things in the heavens and the Middle World, also known as the Corn Mother or Earth Mother, depending on the group, location, and associated oral tradition" (2004: 143). Diaz's analysis encompasses multiple oral traditions, providing for the possibility that this iconographic image represents all of these interrelated mother figures, in their varied manifestations. Always, she is associated with fertility, agriculture, generation, and the land.

The first figure of the Corn Mother (figure 19.3), featured in essays by Reilly and Diaz-Granados, shows corn growing "from her outstretched hands" and sunflowers growing from her back, with her body emerging from a basket or "sacred bundle" (Reilly 2004: 133). This figurine, from the Kent and Jonnie Westbrook

Figure 19.3   Corn Goddess figurine. Dr. Kent and Jonnie Westbrook Collection, Little Rock, Arkansas. With permission by Grove Hill Publishing.

Collection, was found at the confluence of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, but was crafted at an upriver Cahokia "workshop." She appears to encapsulate the essence of the Corn Mother story, with corn simultaneously emerging from her body and offered to the people from her hands. The basket represents the food that she carries and offers in many of the stories – the corn itself is a sacred gift from the body of the Corn/Earth Mother. She is both the giver and the gift. It is significant that she holds the legs and hoofs of a deer in her hands, bound, side-by-side, to the stalks of corn. In Cherokee versions of the story, Selu is joined in complementary duality to Kanati, her husband, the deer – a symbiotic and symbolic relationship between planting and hunting (Awiakta 1993; Justice 2006). Yet, the Corn Mother also has other significant relations. She is entwined with other plants, here represented by sunflowers. The mounds planted in Mississippian towns featured intercropping of corn with beans and squash, as well as melons, gourds, Jerusalem artichokes, and sunflowers. In many ways, each supported the growth of the others. In the classic story of the "three sisters," the squash shades the corn from the sun, allowing the soil to retain moisture, and the beans climb up the stalks of corn, contributing essential nutrients to the soil, while the corn supports the growth of the beans. The relationships between plants shown in this

Figure 19.4 Corn Mother figurine, known as "Birger figurine." With permission by the Illinois State Archaeological Survey, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

figure also represent the relationship between "Worlds": while corn roots the mother firmly in "This World," the earth, the sunflowers reach for the Sky, the "Upper World," creating a relational oppositional pull and a balance between the sun and the earth.

The second figure (figure 19.4), found in the Cahokia environs, shows the Corn Mother, with gourds or squashes growing in vines up her back, "hoeing" the back of a snake-like figure, on which she seems to perch or emerge (Reilly 2004: 134). Again, we see the relationship of intercropping, between corn and the vining squash which protects her from harm. Reilly (ibid.) notes that she also carries a bundle or basket on her back, which women planters might have carried during the harvest. This connects the figure of the Corn Mother to the actual women who cultivated the essential grain and her "sisters." One of the most important elements of the Corn Mother story, as Awiakta relates, is its emphasis on the power of women planters and respect for the embodiments of the Corn Mother, the givers of life. While the previous figure suggests a relationship between This World and the Upper World, this figure connects the earth to the "Lower World," encapsulated here in the image of the Corn Mother cultivating the body of the "tie-snake," the anomalous, amphibious representative of the waters,

which signals, in oral traditions throughout the MIIS, relational transformation (Womack 1999: 32, 200; Lankford 2004, 2007; Reilly 2004: 134).

In order to understand the relationships between "Worlds," and between these three iconographic figures – the corn, the deer, and the snake – we need to understand both the cosmography of the MIIS and the complex, layered oral traditions associated with these figures. Indeed, it is important to know that the iconographic media produced in this network also map space, both cosmological and geographic.

Relational Opposition: The Three Worlds and the Twins

In Mississippian iconography and in living oral traditions in descendant Native nations, the conceptualization of the cosmos operates within a framework of "balanced opposition" (Justice 2006: 27). As Reilly suggests, the "cosmos is organized in layers," including the Lower World of Water, the Upper World of Sky, and This World, this earth, floating upon the world below (Womack 1999: 239–40; Reilly 2004: 127; Lankford 2007: 20–33). The layers are interactive, connected by a "central axis" that is represented by a center pole, or great tree, as in the Haudenosaunee Great Tree of Peace.[8] This "cylindrical" system revolves with the sun and moon, with the day and night sky "vaults" rotating on an axis, the masculine sun associated with the day, the feminine moon associated with the darkness and the waters (Reilly 2004: 127; Lankford 2004: 208).[9] The moon is often linked with the Corn Mother, while the sun and morning star are often linked to her husband. In Muskogee cosmology, as Craig Womack relates, the "Upper World and Lower World are opposed to each other, and humans are in the middle, in a fragile balance between the three worlds." There is "balanced opposition" between the Sky World, "a realm of order and periodicity," and the Water World, which is much more chaotic, but associated with fertility (Womack 1999: 32, 200, 239–51). "This World, where humans live, is a less ideal version of the Upper World," and contains portals, such as rivers, lakes, and caves, to the World below. In some oral traditions and iconography, as represented here, This World is upheld by snake figures from the Lower World, placed in the four cardinal directions, which also operate within a framework of relational opposition (figure 19.5).

The snakes depicted here represent manifestations of one of several beings, common in oral traditions, who can traverse and mediate between worlds. This figure, which appears prominently in MIIS iconography, is known as the "tie-snake" in contemporary Muskogee Creek oral traditions, while archaeologists often call it the "piasa," after an Illinois word (Womack 1999: 200, 244; Lankford 2007: 109–11). Most often taking the shape of a horned snake or a water panther, in Creek cosmology the tie-snake is "part of the balance of oppositions," an "anomalous" animal who shares "in one body Lower World characteristics of snake/fish (water) and This World characteristics of deer (horns)" (Womack, 200; Reilly 2004: 127; Lankford 2004: 208–14). In feline manifestation, he is a large cat who inhabits the water. This

Figure 19.5 Gorget (pendant), probably Middle Mississippian (Castilian Springs Mound, Tennessee). With permission by National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (Catalog No. 15/584).

amphibious body allows the tie-snake to "transcend boundaries" but also to seduce humans from This World, an encounter that may lead to dangerous consequences or to the acquisition of transformative power (Womack, 203).

While those archaeologists and historians who do engage with oral traditions rely mainly on ethnographic reports, contemporary Native literature may provide a more fertile ground for comprehension and interpretation of these conceptual worlds and the figures who inhabit them. Creative writers enable these dynamic figures to emerge out of the world of ethnography, where folklore is often captured in its most stale and stilted forms, and into a poetic world, resembling our own, where these multiple layers continue to structure the cosmology of the inhabitants. "Embedded in Muscogee tribal memory," the tie-snake, as Muskogee poet Joy Harjo writes in "The Flood," "is still present in the lakes and rivers of Alabama and Oklahoma, a force we reckon with despite the proliferation of inventions that keep us from ourselves" (Harjo 1996: 15). In her complex, layered poem, he is a living "myth" who may take the form of "the most handsome man in the tribe" (14). This iconographic and storied figure also makes key appearances in Muskogee poet Louis Oliver's bilingual collection *The Horned Snake* (1982) and in Craig Womack's novel *Drowning in Fire* (2001), where the "King of the Tie-Snakes" manifests himself as a major force in the life of the protagonist, and Womack's

influential monograph *Red on Red*, where the tie-snake becomes a theory of anomaly and "queerness" (1999: 244).

In "Notes Toward a Theory of Anomaly," Cherokee literary scholar and novelist Daniel Heath Justice develops Womack's theory further, examining anomaly "as a specific articulation of difference drawn from the trans-tribal archive of Mississippian iconography" and exploring "the significant cosmological and social role that anomalous figures hold in some of Mississippianism's descendant traditions," to consider how such a framework may enable "understanding of both queerness and tribal belonging among Cherokees and other Southeastern nations" (2010: 209). The thorny and vexed political questions that Justice raises in his essay are fully contemporary, even as he turns to ancient iconography to frame them. This theoretical move reflects a significant point regarding oral traditions: they are alive in contemporary communities and emerge as key transformative figures in contemporary literature.

As Southeastern scholars, novelists, and poets have observed, the tie-snake not only has the power to move between "This World" and the "Lower World," but to blur the boundaries between the world embedded in oral traditions and the one we recognize as the "real world" of our own daily lives. For example, as Womack and Oliver relate, the Muskogee people have an oral tradition that suggests it may have been the "tie-snake" who took the life of well-known author Alexander Posey, not for his writings, but for "treacherous real estate dealings" that led to the alienation of Creek land (Womack 1999: 203). In its Anishinaabe form, the iconographic figure emerges as a central, albeit elusive, character in Louise Erdrich's novels, where he appears as Misshepeshu, the Lower World consort of the tough and powerful Fleur, who inhabits Lake Matchimanito and enables Fleur to resist the loggers who come for her land. Related snake figures, which traverse the U.S.–Mexico border and travel across the Atlantic in slave trade vessels, emerge to play a leading role in Laguna author Leslie Marmon Silko's epic of the American land, *Almanac of the Dead*, where "Mach'shra-True'-Ee," the "great serpent," comes as a prophetic messenger who has transmitted the "names and identities of the Day and Years," and "has told the stories on each day and year so you could be prepared and protect yourselves" (1992: 135; figure 19.6).

In the "dynamic" duality that marks this cosmology, the horned snake and the Lower World are situated in relational opposition to the thunder birds/beings of the Upper World, who counteract the "great snake's" ambivalent, transformative, and sometimes dangerous activities (Reilly 2004: 127; Lankford 2004: 208–14). As Tuscarora historian David Cusick related in his early nineteenth-century recounting of the Haudenosaunee creation story, the Upper and Lower Worlds existed before "This World" was created. Only through the collaborative activity of water animals and the "woman who fell from the sky" does the earth come into being, formed from the deepest mud of the Water World and a single seed of the Sky World, on the back of the Great Turtle (Cusick 1961: 19; cf. Parker 1989: 61–63; Shenandoah and George 1998: 7–14). The Corn Mother lies between them, emerging from the earth, but drawing and requiring nurture from sky (sun) and water.

Figure 19.6 Gorget with falcon and underwater panther, representing dynamic duality between the Upper and Lower Worlds. With permission by National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (Catalog No. 22/7574).

In the Haudenosaunee story, as with many other narratives of the MIIS, the Corn Mother is the daughter of Sky Woman, with her narrative forming an "episode" in the longer cycle. The Water World that enables the survival of Sky Woman and her daughter is thus crucial to the emergence of corn. In a Wabanaki version told by Penobscot author Joseph Nicolar, the first mother conceives of a food to nourish her starving children while standing in water, a green blade trailing behind her (Nicolar 2007: 135). In iconography, the Corn Mother is connected to the moon, which in turn is connected to the Lower World (Reilly 2004). Similarly, in the Haudenosaunee story, Mother Corn becomes Grandmother Moon (Shenandoah and George 1998: 25–27). Planting is governed by the cycles of the moon, as are the ocean waves that surround this Turtle Island, as are the cycles of women's fertility. Iconographic images, like figure 19.3, which connect the Corn Mother to the snake are also significant, in that the tie-snake is connected to the Lower World, the transition between worlds (birth), and the idea of regeneration (represented metonymically by the snake's skin). Building on the Haudenosaunee interpretation, these episodes and their associated iconography may also map a revolution in the history of the continent, from dependence on hunting – as represented by the world of water/game animals – to reliance on agriculture, as represented by the emergence of the Corn Mother, and the cultivation of corn and her two sisters,

beans and squash. Figure 19.4 may well be interpreted as an iconographic representation of that transformative episode.

The Rise of the Cultivators: Agricultural Revolution and Complementary Duality

However, this agricultural revolution led to significant cultural and political transformations, which may also be reflected in the figurine. These transformations included impressive architectural and engineering achievements, which are just beginning to be understood by scholars. The city of Cahokia, where this figure was created, encompassed an expanse of ten or more miles along the Mississippi River, including ceremonial centers (whose presence is continued today at traditional grounds in many Native nations); irrigational systems and aqueducts that enabled planting and helped mitigate droughts; communal agricultural fields cultivated by women (including raised mounds that offered protection against seasonal and periodic flooding); and a solar calendar built into the architectural geography which regulated ceremonial and political life as well as planting seasons. The mounds built at Cahokia and other Mississippian towns "represent achievements in science and aesthetics on a monumental scale" (Allen 2010: 809). In the words of Chad Allen, "They integrate the precise observation of natural phenomena with geometry and other abstract forms of knowledge, as well as with practical skills in mathematics, architectural design, engineering, and construction." Recent research suggests that women planters may have been involved in their design and construction. One intriguing example is the possibility (suggested by researchers at the University of Cincinnati) that it may have been women planters who engineered and built the aqueducts at an earthwork on the Ohio River.[10]

The role of indigenous women in this transformation is supported and elucidated by surviving oral traditions. For example, Awiakta emphasizes that the Selu story encodes proper respect for both the plant and its cultivators, as well as balance between genders, represented by the relationship between Selu and Kanati. Selu's power is also manifested in the Cherokee Beloved Woman, a leadership position which formed a significant part of the Cherokee political system into the nineteenth century. The Beloved Woman Nanyehi spoke strongly, to her nation and the American government, against the coerced removal of the Cherokee nation from its southern Appalachian homeland to "Indian Territory" (in present-day Oklahoma).[11] "Do not part with any of our lands," she told the Men's Council, "this act … would be like destroying your mothers" (Kilcup 2000: 29; Awiakta 1993: 95–99; Justice 2006: 31–42).

Likewise, Barbara Mann's work on Haudenosaunee history connects the rise of corn agriculture with the foundation of the Confederacy, emphasizing the economic and political ascension of women as the planters and the "cultivators of peace." According to Mann, the violence that necessitated the development of the Great Law arose from a cult of war that represented a "backlash against maize

agriculture, which had supplanted hunting and fishing as a subsistence base, shifting the relative social power of men and women. As women raised corn, beans and squash and began inhabiting towns year round, the need for winter hunting lessened, stripping males of their former importance" (Mann and Fields 1997: 122). Mann provides an interpretation of the Great Law that shows the triumph of corn agriculture, in a new symbiosis with deer-hunting, and the Great Peace over the war cult, whose symbol was the snake. In the Great Law, this image is represented in particular by the war leader Tadadaho, whose head was covered with snakes, the manifestation of his destructive "thoughts" (Mann and Fields 1997; Mann 2004; Parker 1989: 405).

Turning our attention back to the figure of the Corn Mother hoeing the back of the snake, we might consider another interpretation for the figurine, based on Mann's analysis. In this reading, the Corn Mother has tamed the snake, seduced and subdued the "war cult," and incorporated them into her agricultural system. She not only sits atop this layered history, but emerges from it, representing the emergence of an agricultural society from a violent period dominated by male leaders of war. In this interpretation, we need to understand that the Haudenosaunee narrative insists on the transformation and *incorporation* of Tadodaho who, after embracing the Great Peace, becomes the symbolic leader of the Confederacy's central council fire. According to many versions, Tadodaho's mind is "cured" ("became healthy") and "his crooked parts are made straight" only through the persuasive oration and song of Dakanawida, Hayonwatha, and Jigonsaseh, the first clan mother of the new confederacy, known as "the Mother of Nations," and the "leader of the Cultivators" (Mann 2004: 126–46; Mann and Fields 1997; Parker 1968: 26–29, 89–91).[12] It is not merely a defeat of, or triumph over, the war cult but the restoration of balance that is emphasized. In Daniel Justice's words, "the anomaly is absolutely essential to its ostensible opposite" (2010).

According to Mann's interpretation, the Great Law sought to create a political system which would ameliorate conflict and engender a balance in power between male hunters and female cultivators. While Confederacy clan mothers are associated with Jigonsaseh and cultivation (corn), clan chiefs are associated with deer, and when they are brought forward by the clan mothers to become "Rodiyaner," they are "crowned, emblematically, with deer antlers" (Parker 1968: 29, 91). After Tadodaho is transformed and given the responsibility of protecting "the confederate council fire," the snakes that crowned his head are replaced by deer antlers (29, 97). Thus, both figurines may correspond with what Mann calls the "deer/corn matrix" that emerged with the Great Law of Peace.

This trope of balanced opposition is central to oral narratives and iconography in the wider region. The Haudenosaunee conceptualization corresponds with the relationship between Selu and Kanati in Cherokee oral traditions, Yellow Woman and Buffalo Man in the Pueblo/Keres Kochininako stories, and the Corn Mother and "Morning Star" or "Red Horn" pairing in Mississippian iconography and related oral traditions of the Osage, Pawnee/Arikara and HoChunk (Justice 2006: 27–28; Awiakta 1993; Silko 1981; Gunn Allen 1993; Reilly 2004;

Figure 19.7 The Twins. Illustration by John Kahionhes Fadden and David Kanietakeron Fadden. From Shenandoah and George 1998: 38. With permission by Iroquois Indian Museum, Howes Cave, New York.

Echo-Hawk 2000: 275). While the Corn Mother is generally associated with the moon, Morning Star is associated with the sun, demonstrating the balance between the Upper World and Lower World, between day and night, as well as between hunting and planting. The Green Corn festivals carried out today at Muskogee Creek and Cherokee grounds have at their center the sacred fire, the sun's representative on earth, even as they celebrate the importance of corn in sustaining the life of the community. This "complementary duality" is also expressed in the narrative and iconography of the twins, the Corn Mother's sons, who represent the relational opposition and "principle of mutuality" that holds the world in a delicate balance (figures 19.7, 19.8; Justice 2006: 27–28; Mann and Fields 1997: 123; Shenandoah and George 1998: 28–39; Parker 1989: 62–73). The concept of relational opposition is perfectly captured in the image of the twins and in the stories of their journeys and battles as they act in a "contrapuntal" dynamic to create an imperfect world, in which human beings will strive for balance between participatory thought and impulsive acts (Connelly 1999: 75; Wonderley 2000: 19; Brooks 2008: 109–11).

Figure 19.8 Shell Gorget (Pendant) with Eagle Dancers Motif, Late Mississippian period, circa 1300 CE. Courtesy of the Frank H. McClung Museum, University of Tennessee. http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu [accessed July 2013].

Towards a Map of the Mother Corn Era

This framework of complementary duality can (and should) also be applied to scholarship on Ancient American history. Without the knowledge embedded in oral traditions, including complex living narratives within indigenous communities and literatures, the interpretation of the iconographic writing systems of "Turtle Island" will remain unbalanced. Scholars may, without knowing, continue to follow in the unilateral path of the brother who acts rashly on individualistic impulse, without regard for the multifaceted community of "This World" or his role as a participant within it. While ethnography and archaeology have framed the categories of "folklore" and "material culture" as separate spheres, "This World" requires a balance, in which oral traditions can play a key "participatory" role. Just as the oral traditions themselves call for a balance between worlds, between the tie-snake, Corn Mother, and her husband the deer, we should look to models that strive for balance between the oral tradition and the categories that have formed its *assumed* opposite, including "history," "literature," and material culture.

Thus, to come full circle to the models with which we began, Roger Echo-Hawk suggests that the strongest historical scholarship will emerge when oral traditions attain "comparable status" with written documents as "records that can be analyzed for valid evidence about human history" (2000: 268). He models a methodology which combines archaeological data and oral traditions to trace the potential routes which his "Caddoan" ancestors took as they "followed Mother Corn upon a great migration" from western mountains to the fertile Missouri River, establishing their home in a place where she would flourish. Like the Quiché who emerged as the people of corn, the Caddoan people "emerged from the earth" with "corn seeds in their hands." Like the Haudenosaunee narratives, Caddoan oral traditions also associate the "return" of Mother Corn "with the "cessation of fighting" and the "founding of a new social order" (Echo-Hawk, 275; Calloway 2003: 109).[13]

Only by bringing these oral traditions together with relevant archaeological research and related graphic texts does the full network of the Corn Mother's travel emerge. As Gordon Brotherston's work successfully demonstrates, buffalo hide paintings – iconic images often read as representations of tribal histories or alternatively, of an elusive American past – also document these networks of exchange, travel, and proliferation. Our own contemporary version of these networks of exchange, the digital world, has offered a unique opportunity for scholars and the general public to view some of these invaluable buffalo hide histories juxtaposed in relationship to each other. The Smithsonian hosts a major on-line exhibit of Lakota "Winter Counts."[14] While these display a "spiral" of history, in which single symbolic images operate as mnemonic devices for recalling the events and narratives of particular years (or generations), these graphic texts were merely part of a larger system. As Colin Calloway has implied, the land itself operated as "one vast winter count," the "topography," in the words of Gene Weltfish, "like a series of vivid pictorial images, each a configuration where this or that event had happened in the past to make it memorable" (Calloway 2003: 5, 8, 434).

On the Plains, among the Lakota, the emergence of corn in their upper Mississippi River homeland marks an "inaugural" event in tribal oral histories (Brotherston 1992: 183). In the nineteenth century, the Brulé Lakota winter count keeper Wapóštangi, or Battiste Good, created a mnemonic pictographic history which recorded, not only the "winters" or years of recent memory, as had become common on the Plains, but the generational cycles of tribal history, reaching back to July 900 (CE) (Greene and Thornton 2007: 3–4, 42–3, 292).[15] Its spiral opens with a graphic image of "White Buffalo Calf Woman," a Lakota manifestation of the Corn Mother, who gave the people a bundle that contained "four grains of maize, one white, one black, one yellow, and one variegated," echoing the Nahuatl story, but adapted to the hunting culture of the Plains. The colors not only correspond with the varied types of corn, but also with the four directions in which Corn and her stories traveled from the center of the Mississippi. According to Battiste Good's account, "She said, 'I am a buffalo, The White-Buffalo-Cow. I will spill my milk all over the earth, that the people may live.' She meant by her milk maize, which is seen in the picture dropping from her udders." Combining both hunting (buffalo)

Figure 19.9   Quapaw Embassy buffalo hide painting. Musée du Quai Branly / Scala / Art Resource, NY.

and planting (the "milk" of "maize"), she embodies the balance inherent in the Corn Mother stories, her ankles encircled by "snakes" of grass which "signify green growth" (Smithsonian website; Mallery 1893: 290; Brotherston 1992: 83, 183; Greene and Thornton 2007: 293).

It was this same mother figure who led the Caddoan peoples east on their journey towards the Mississippi, and onward to the Arkansas, Platte, and Missouri rivers, where they would later encounter the Lakota, as well as the many other nations who proliferated in concentric circles from the center of Cahokia (Echo-Hawk 2000: 281–84). And it was this same mother figure that drew in the Lakota's relatives from the east, the Quapaw, whose oral traditions are beautifully illustrated on this painted buffalo hide (figure 19.9), one of "the oldest surviving texts of [its] kind on Turtle Island" (Brotherston 1992: 181–82).

In his analysis of this graphic text, Brotherston reveals a map of Quapaw towns (represented here by houses) on the lower Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers in relation to upriver Cahokia (the great house), corresponding to oral traditions that recount the Quapaw migration from the Ohio River through Cahokia, and the subsequent spread of Quapaw agricultural towns "downstream" on the Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas River, where the Quapaw people would have traded with those Caddoan towns (Brotherston, 181–82).[16] The map also illustrates the relationship of balance between the powers of the sun and moon, between male hunters and female "dancers," connected directly to the towns and their ceremonial

dance grounds, which are likewise connected by a line to the great house at Cahokia and the pipe which was, in Lakota tradition, given to the people by Buffalo Calf Woman (Brotherston, 182). This buffalo hide maps not only a history of migrations but of continuing interaction and shared culture among diverse, intertwined peoples and their histories.

Nahuatl graphic texts, such as *Tlaxcala Lienzo*, map these relationships even further, into native homelands in the American Southwest, demonstrating economic and cultural relationships between Mesoamerican cities and the ancestors of the Hopi, Navajo, Pueblo, and Apache, among others (Brotherston, 15–16, 21, 245–49). Oral traditions among these nations contain elements and episodes shared with both Mesoamerican and Mississippian story cycles, including the narrative of the Corn Mother and her twin sons, as well as the emergence of maize from cooperative activity and women's labor, which coincides with the emergence of human beings into a new era.

In calling for a reconceptualization of terms, Echo-Hawk proposes a "Mother Corn era" for this period, marked by the adaptation of corn and its associated iconography. This renaming resonates with "the Mississippian Iconographic Interaction Sphere" and with Mann's description of Haudenosaunee eras, which "describe what the [tradition] Keepers see as major paradigm shifts," including the emergence of "maize agriculture" and the formation of the Great Law (Reilly and Garber 2007a; Mann and Fields 1997). Timeframes of the "Mother Corn era" may differ from region to region, depending on when Native peoples adopted corn agriculture and its cultural complex. What will matter most, however, is developing an understanding of the places through which Corn and her stories traveled.

In giving more attention to oral traditions, we need not only to address the reconceptualization of time but the recentering of place.[17] As Silko notes, the stories of the Twin Hero brothers and Kochininako are attached to distinct geographic features in the Pueblo landscape (Silko 1981; 1996: 33–34). Among the Western Apache, as Charles Henry of Cibecue explains, "groups of people named themselves for the places where their women first planted corn," and matrilineal clan lines are rooted in these places (Basso 1996: 21). For them, "the past is a well-worn 'path' or 'trail' (*'intin*) which was traveled first by the people's founding ancestors and which subsequent generations of Apaches have traveled ever since" (31). Many graphic texts, whether painted on portable hides or carved on permanent rock, map these relationships between peoples and places and mark the trails of cultural transformation. Furthermore, the land itself can operate as a living text-map. In the words of Chadwick Allen, indigenous earthworks may, as poet Allison Hedge Coke suggests, represent "a still readable form of indigenous writing – not simply on the land but literally through the medium of the land itself – toward nothing less than imagination of possible renewal" (Allen 2010: 808). Such "writings," combined with oral traditions, represent a frequently traveled route, which fosters an "interior journey" (Silko 1996: 35–37; Warhus 1997: 8). "The Emergence," Silko writes of the Pueblo, "was an emergence into a precise cultural identity," an "interior journey" of "awareness and

imagination" which delineated the people's difference from and complex relationship to "all other life" with which they shared space (Silko 1996: 36–37). Oral traditions of emergence, creation, and migration, linked with iconography and place, serve three functions, among others. They map a historical journey of cultural transformation taken by the ancestors; at the same time they provide a map for descendants to take a similar journey, through the ancestral past, that will lead them to emerge into the ever-spiraling future in this place. The only successful routes to discerning or mapping these Ancient American histories, is to learn to "read" them in their multilayered cultural contexts, among multiple oral narratives, literary media, and place-based representations. Such a course may lead us not only to understand a seemingly inaccessible past, but also to map alternative routes to the future.

Notes

1   Anishinaabe scrolls are maintained in a specialized segment of the community, the Midé Society. Despite and because of their sacred character, they have in the past been pilfered by antiquarians and anthropologists and are therefore a protected form of sacred knowledge. To be clear, I am not advocating that scholars should collect and analyze these scrolls. Yet, importantly, there are Anishinaabe scholars who combine academic training with their Midé education in analyzing literature. See, for example, Sinclair 2009.

2   An image of the original belt can be viewed on the Onondaga Nation website: www.onondaganation.org/culture/wpm_hiawatha.html [accessed July 2013]. Quotations are drawn from this page.

3   Challenging previous scholarship which has placed the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy either just prior to or just after the advent of European colonization, Mann and Fields combine mathematical analysis of astronomical data with archaeological and ethnohistorical research in order to pinpoint the year (1142) and location (Ganondagan, near Victor, New York) of the eclipse that marked the origin of the Confederacy in mnemonic representations and oral accounts.

4   For images of Cahokia, see Hall 2004.

5   Mark Zender, Lecture on the *Storied Walls* Exhibit, Peabody Museum, Harvard University, February 4, 2010.

6   Robert Venables, personal communication: "Ethnohistory of the Iroquois," Cornell University, Spring 1999.

7   I acknowledge Abenaki language-keeper and storyteller Jesse Bruchac, who relayed that such figures acted as mnemonic devices, similar to petroglyphs, for the storytellers who carried them (personal communication, August 2009).

8   See Parker 1968: plate 2. The central axis or Great Tree is also analogous or related to the "Green Road" or axis mundi of the Popol Vuh. See Tedlock 1996: 116, 272–73.

9   Among Cherokee people, this duality is reversed. For example, in the origin story of Uktena, the horned snake, and in their tradition generally, the sun is feminine and the moon is her (masculine) brother; Mooney 1900: 252.

10 "'Fort' Actually Ancient Aqueduct," September 24, 2008. *Scientific American* podcast. http://www.sciam.com/podcast/episode.cfm?id=fort-actually-ancient-aqueduct-08-09-24 [accessed July 2013].

11 Removal refers to the proposed emigration of the Cherokee and other southeastern nations from their traditional homelands to "Indian Territory" (later Oklahoma), to make way for American settlement, an issue that was heatedly debated in the Cherokee Nation and in the United States. With Removal supported by the 1830 Indian Removal Act and the hotly contested Treaty of New Echota, and its opposition supported by a resolution of the Cherokee Nation's Council, the majority of Cherokee citizens, and the U.S. Supreme Court, the issue divided both nations, and eventually led to the forced removal of the majority of Cherokee families, known as "The Trail Where We Cried," by United States military forces. See Justice 2006: 45–88.

12 Special thanks to Alyssa Mt. Pleasant for sharing an unpublished essay, "Searching for Her Rightful Place: Jigonsaseh's Legacy Amongst the Haudenosaunee."

13 Caddoan refers to a group of related peoples centered on the Arkansas, Red and Missouri Rivers, who are the ancestors of modern tribal nations such as the Caddo and Pawnee. Caddoan is also a term archaeologists use to describe the emergence of a particular cultural tradition among these peoples during the Mississippian era. Their culture flourished in parts of modern-day Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana. The contemporary Caddo Nation and Pawnee Nation are located within Oklahoma.

14 Readers of this essay can view these at http://wintercounts.si.edu/flashindex.html [accessed July 2013].

15 A "generational cycle" was seventy years, "the ideal lifespan of an old man," or occasionally, on this winter count, thirty years. See Greene and Thornton 2007, 42–3, 292–93. View the first image of the Battiste Good Winter Count by clicking "View the Winter Counts" on the Smithsonian website (previous note), then clicking the "Battiste Good" tab. This will bring you directly to the image of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, and the "Introduction" to the Battiste Good Winter Count (http://wintercounts.si.edu/flashindex.html).

16 Their immediate relations, the Omaha ("U-maha") or "upstream" people, on the same migration, diverged at the Mississippi, moving upriver. They then traveled to the Missouri River, where they, too, would have encountered Caddoan peoples, and built their houses on the "middle reaches" of the Missouri (Brotherston 1992: 181).

17 In the landmark *God is Red* (1992), Vine Deloria emphasizes that for Native American peoples space, not time, is the defining aspect of history.

References

Allen, C. 2010. "Serpentine Figures, Sinuous Relations: Thematic Geometry in Allison Hedge Coke's *Blood Run*." *American Literature* 82.4: 807–34.

Awiakta, M. 1993. *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom*. Golden, CO.

Basso, K. 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque.

Benton-Banai, E. 1988. *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*. St. Paul. MN.

Blackhawk, N. 2006. *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*. Cambridge, MA.

Brooks, L. 2008. *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*. Minneapolis.

Brotherston, G. 1992. *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through Their Literature*. New York and Cambridge.

Calloway, C.G. 2003. *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark*. Lincoln, NE.

Connelly, K.A. 1999. *The Textual Function of Onondaga Aspect, Mood, and Tense: A Journey into Onondaga Conceptual Space*. Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University.

Cusick, D. 1961 (1825). *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations*. Lockport, NY.

Deloria, V., Jr. 1992. *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*. Golden, CO.

Diaz-Granados, C. 2004. "Marking Stone, Land, Body, Spirit: Rock Art and Mississippian Iconography." In Townsend and Sharp 2004: 138–49.

Echo-Hawk, R.C. 2000. "Ancient History in the New World: Integrating Oral Traditions and the Archaeological Record in Deep Time." *American Antiquity* 65.2: 267–90.

Erdrich, L. 2003. *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*. Washington, DC.

Greene, C.S. and R. Thornton. 2007. *The Year the Stars Fell: Lakota Winter Counts at the Smithsonian*. Washington, DC.

Gunn Allen, P. 1993. "Kochinnenako in Academe: Three Approaches to Interpreting a Keres Indian Tale." In M. Graulich (ed.), *Yellow Woman*, 83–112. New Brunswick, NJ.

Hall, R.L. 2004. "The Cahokia Site and Its People." In Townsend and Sharp 2004: 93–104.

Harjo, J. 1996. "The Flood." In Harjo, *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky*, 14–17. New York.

Justice, D.H. 2006. *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*. Minneapolis.

Justice, D.H. 2010. "Notes Toward a Theory of Anomaly." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16.1–2: 207–42.

Kilcup, K.L. (ed.). 2000. *Native American Women's Writing c. 1800–1924: An Anthology*. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Lankford, G.E. 2004. "World on a String: Some Cosmological Components of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex." In Townsend and Sharp 2004: 207–18.

Lankford, G.E. 2007. "Some Cosmological Motifs in the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex." In Reilly and Garber 2007a: 8–38.

Mann, B. 2004. *Iroquois Women: The Gantowisas*. New York.

Mann, B., and J.L. Fields. 1997. "A Sign in the Sky: Dating the League of the Haudenosaunee." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 21.2: 105–63.

Mann, C. 2006. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*. New York.

Mooney, J. 1900. "Myths of the Cherokee." Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1897–98, Part I: 14–427. Washington, DC.

Nicolar, J. 2007 (1893). *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man*. Ed. A. Kolodny. Durham, NC.

Oliver, L. 1982. *The Horned Snake*. Merrick, NY.

Parker, A.C. 1968. "The Constitution of the Five Nations." In W. Fenton (ed.), *Parker on the Iroquois*, 14–60. Syracuse.

Parker, A.C. 1989. *Seneca Myths and Folk Tales*. Ed. W. Fenton. Lincoln, NE.

Pauketat, T.R. 2004. *Ancient Cahokia and the Mississippians*. New York and Cambridge.

Reilly, F.K. III. 2004. "People of Earth, People of Sky: Visualizing the Sacred in Native American Art of the Mississippian Period." In Townsend and Sharp 2004: 124–37.

Reilly, F.K. III., and J.F. Garber. (eds.). 2007a. *Ancient Objects and Sacred Realms: Interpretations of Mississippian Iconography*. Austin.

Reilly, F.K. III., and J.F. Garber. 2007b. "Introduction." In Reilly and Garber (eds.) 2007a: 1–7.

Salisbury, N. 1996. "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53.3: 435–58.

Shenandoah, J., and D.M. George. 1998. *Sky Woman: Legends of the Iroquois*. Santa Fe.

Silko, L.M. 1981. *Storyteller*. New York.

Silko, L.M. 1992. *Almanac of the Dead*. New York.

Silko, L.M. 1996. *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. New York.

Sinclair, N.J. 2009. "A Sovereignty of Transmotion: Imagination and the 'Real,' Gerald Vizenor and Native Literary Nationalism." In G.D. Henry Jr., P. Soler Nieves, and S. Martínez-Falquina (eds.), *Stories through Theories/Theories through Stories: North American Indian Writing, Storytelling, and Critique*, 123–58. East Lansing.

Tedlock, D. (trans.). 1996. *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life*. New York.

Townsend, R.F., and R.V. Sharp (eds.). 2004. *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand: American Indian Art of the Ancient Midwest and South*. Chicago and New Haven.

Warhus, M. 1997. *Another America: Native American Maps and the History of Our Land*. New York.

Warren, W. 2009. *History of the Ojibway People*. Ed. T. Schenk. Minneapolis.

Womack, C.S. 1999. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis.

Womack, C.S. 2001. *Drowning in Fire*. Tucson.

Wonderley, A. 2000. "The Elm-Antone Story in Comparative and Historical Context." In D. Elm and H. Antone, *The Oneida Creation Story*, 7–27. Eds. F.G. Lounsbury and B. Gick. Lincoln, NE.

Index